

DEVILS IN THE DIALOGUE:  
THE AIR FORCE AND CONGRESS

BY  
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## DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.



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## ABSTRACT

The Air Force began its existence in 1947 as a bright star with almost limitless potential to defend the nation. Today, however, the Air Force appears to struggle in communicating its value and trustworthiness, and congressional support has waned. The relationship is strained if not adversarial.

The more effectively the Air Force engages with Congress, the better the Air Force can posture to defend national interests. The intent of this paper is to understand the current relationship between the Air Force and Congress and determine if this relationship is configured in optimum fashion to contribute to the nation's security.

This paper concentrates on the Air Force's Legislative Liaison (SAF/LL) office as a conduit to effectively communicate the Air Force's needs to Congress, which is vitally important during periods of struggle. A focused review of current interactions, both formal and informal, as well as comparison with the other services, will highlight strengths and weaknesses within the Air Force's Legislative Liaison office and its ability to provide Congressional support.

Synthesis of the information provides recommendations for the Air Force to better coordinate its strategic messaging and methodology with Congress via the legislative liaison office. The SAF/LL office has a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between the two organizations and eliminate the devils in the dialogue.

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## Introduction

### **Background**

The relationship between the legislative and executive branches of the government is defined by the Constitution but has continually evolved since 1789 when the first Federal Congress convened. The President is the Commander-in-Chief, but Congress has the power to raise armies. Hence, the relationship between the two branches of government becomes, at times, a civil-military affair.

Legislation like the National Security Act of 1947 and the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 refined the civil-military relationship between the legislative and executive branches, but the daily interactions between the Air Force and Congress are not so narrowly defined and are open for assessment, evaluation, and possible improvement. This paper will focus on one small corner of the civil-military relationship – *the relationship of the Air Force with Congress via the legislative liaison office*. The relationship between the Air Force and Congress is episodic; containing periods of amity but punctuated by periods of struggle. The Air Force receives the most Congressional support when the service possesses what Congress needs to protect national interests, and at those times legislative liaison (LL) is of less importance. LL, however, is paramount to the effective communication required with Capitol Hill during the inevitable periods when the Air Force is not at the forefront of the nation's defense.

The Air Force began its existence as a bright star with almost limitless potential to defend the nation. Today, however, the Air Force appears to struggle in communicating its value and trustworthiness, and congressional support has waned. The relationship is strained if not adversarial.

The more effectively the Air Force engages with Congress, the better the Air Force can posture to defend national interests. The intent of this paper is to understand the current relationship between the Air Force and Congress and determine if this relationship is configured in optimum fashion to contribute to the nation's security.

### **Research Question**

*What is the current relationship between the Air Force and Congress?* In Washington DC, it's often said "the Army is – Dumb, The Navy – Defiant, and the Air Force – Devious."<sup>1</sup> This paper will try to determine why Capitol Hill perceives the Air Force as devious. In order to provide recommendations a focused review of current interactions, both formal and informal, as well as comparison with the other services, will highlight strengths and weaknesses within the Air Force's LL office and it's ability to provide Congressional support. These recommendations should be complemented by a strategic message that enables the Air Force to garner Congressional support for programs to ensure national security.

### **Limitations**

This paper concentrates on the legislative liaison office as a conduit to effectively communicate the Air Force's needs to Congress, which is vitally important during periods of struggle. LL may not be the most consequential part of the relationship, but it is a vital avenue to build rapport and goodwill for times when the Air Force finds itself on the periphery of the defense debate, which has been the case for much of the post-9/11 era.

### **Methodology**

This paper begins with some history of the Air Force's varying relationship with Congress in chapter one. Chapter two delves into the structure of the legislative branch and relationship between Congress,

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with a senior officer experienced in legislative liaison at Air Force and OSD level, interview by the author, 22 March 2011.

the Department of Defense, and specifically the Air Force. The internal organization of the Air Force's Legislative Liaison office is described in detail in chapter three as well as formal and informal interactions with the legislative branch and personnel processes. LL offices are not unique to the Air Force, and chapter four provides insight into how sister services structure themselves to interact with Congress. The final chapter synthesizes the information and provides recommendations for the Air Force to better coordinate its strategic messaging and methodology with Congress via the legislative liaison office. The LL office has a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between the two organizations.



## Chapter 1

### A Brief History

#### **Congressional Appropriations for Military Aviation**

In 1908, the War Department allocated funds, reluctantly, to the Aeronautical Division of the Signal Corps for the purchase and testing of the Wright Flyer.<sup>2</sup> The Army accepted the first airplane in 1909, but Congress' first, direct appropriation for military aviation occurred with a modest sum of \$125,000 in 1911.<sup>3</sup> Between 1908 and 1913, the United States spent only \$430,000 on military and naval aviation, whereas France and Germany each expended \$22 million.<sup>4</sup> In 1914, the Aviation Section, US Signal Corps was created by the Act of July 18, 1914 Chapter 186 (Public Law 143, 63<sup>rd</sup> Congress), 38 Stat. 514 as the primary agency for military aviation; the first funding appropriation for the Aviation Section was only \$250,000 in fiscal year 1915.<sup>5</sup> Anticipating entry into WWI, Congress adopted the National Defense Act of June 3, 1916. This Act increased the size of the Aviation Section, and on 29 August 1916 Congress followed with an appropriations bill that allocated \$13 million dollars—more than 17 times the previous allocations—to the military aeronautical units of the Signal Corps and National Guard.<sup>6</sup>

In 1917, the Signal Corps totaled 1,200 people, but included only 65 flying officers who were mostly in training at the time. The corps contained no combat-ready aircraft.<sup>7</sup> Besides a lack of trained personnel and combat-ready aircraft, the Signal Corps lacked the innovation and

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<sup>2</sup> Richard W. Stewart, *American Military History, Volume 1* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2005), 372.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard C. Nalty, *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the United States Air Force* (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2003), 15.

<sup>4</sup> Stewart, *American Military History, Volume 1*, 372.

<sup>5</sup> Nalty, *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the United States Air Force*, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Nalty, *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the United States Air Force*, 33.

<sup>7</sup> Linda R. Robertson, *The Dream of Civilized Warfare* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 5.

industrial base of European aviation. In early February 1917, the small group of flight officers in the US Signal Corps prepared an appropriations request of \$54 million; they envisioned airplanes as useful but not for offensive purposes.<sup>8</sup> The role of the airplane was to provide tactical support to Army infantry and artillery by providing air reconnaissance. In 1917 estimates called for “1,850 aviators, 300 balloonists, and sixteen reconnaissance squadrons. The plan anticipated 3,000 planes for both training and combat to be built in 1918 and 4,000 in 1919.”<sup>9</sup>

Congress did not seem to understand the urgency for developing military aviation, and finally passed a \$45 million appropriation in June of 1917.<sup>10</sup> However, by the time this bill passed, the US received a “conceptual bombshell” with a request from the French for assistance on the Western Front for the campaign of 1918. The French requested the American government create an air corps of 4,500 airplanes to be sent to support the summer campaign; a 2,000-plane-per-month construction rate was necessary to support the Allied offensive.<sup>11</sup> This request was asking the US to “exceed the production of airplanes and engines of all combatant nations in Europe.”<sup>12</sup> Six days after receiving the French request, the Joint Army and Navy Technical Board requested an allocation for \$707 million to the General Staff.<sup>13</sup> Two days later, a slightly reduced request was sent to the hill, and on July 14, 1917, Congress passed the \$640 million Military Aviation Appropriations Bill – “the largest single appropriation by Congress in its history.”<sup>14</sup> Brigadier General Squier informed Congress the \$640-million appropriation was needed to “put the Yankee punch into the war!”<sup>15</sup> Squier’s call to lead a successful air campaign encapsulated American character and nature.

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<sup>8</sup> Robertson, *The Dream of Civilized Warfare*, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Robertson, *The Dream of Civilized Warfare*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Arnold, Henry, *Global Mission*, (NY: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949), 53.

<sup>11</sup> Nalty, *Winged Shield, Winged Sword: A History of the United States Air Force*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> Robertson, *The Dream of Civilized Warfare*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Robertson, *The Dream of Civilized Warfare*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Frandsen, Bert. *Hat in the Ring*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2003), 1.

<sup>15</sup> “Put the Yankee Punch into the War,” *Official US Bulletin*, Vol 1, June 15, 1917, 2.

Squier contended “airplanes are the logical fighting machines for Americans because we are an imaginative people...we want something that appeals to our knack for inventing things, for getting over obstacles...And the air way is our way.”<sup>16</sup> This appropriation bill showcased the positive relationship between Congress and the infancy of military aviation in the United States. The Congressional appropriation set the foundation for military aviation, suggesting a future independent Air Force, and solidifying aviation as a new military domain.

The increase in personnel and equipment afforded by Congress and the offensive-strategic outlook during WWI developed US aviation as a warfighting tool. The innovative spirit of airmen brought new dimensions to the air domain and catapulted it to increased relevance at the end of WWI. Billy Mitchell, Giulio Douhet, and other air power theorists understood warfare would never exclude the aerial dimension again. Calls for an independent service gained support and commitment from all areas of the military. The United States was late in forming an independent Air Force compared to most countries, but the Congressional support lent to military aviation in 1917, the abilities of air power witnessed in WWI, and the demonstrations of bombing in the European and Pacific theaters in WWII assisted in gaining military and public support for an independent air force at the end of WWII.

### **Independent Air Force and Unification of the Armed Forces**

Assistant Secretary of War for Air Robert Lovett observed the need for a unified staff to allocate and deploy forces during planning for Operation Overlord in April 1944 during WWII.<sup>17</sup> “A separate Air Force should be created in the postwar period, Lovett said, but the Navy should maintain its fleet air arm.”<sup>18</sup> The importance of maintaining a fleet air arm was central to the Navy’s position during unification discussions. In

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<sup>16</sup> “Put the Yankee Punch into the War,” 2.

<sup>17</sup> Wolk, *Toward Independence: The Emergence of the U.S. Air Force*, (Washington DC: Air Force history and Museums Program, 1996), 8.

<sup>18</sup> Wolk, *Toward Independence*, 8.



May 1944, the Joint Chiefs organized a JCS Special Committee for Reorganization of National Defense to construct a postwar plan for the military establishment.<sup>19</sup> The JCS committee found that “American forces were not fully integrating land, sea, and air operations. Under these conditions, parochialism tended to increase...A single Department of Defense at the outset of war would have fostered much better coordination and teamwork between the services.”<sup>20</sup> In April 1945, the committee’s report was signed, but one dissenting opinion by the committee chairman and senior naval member, Admiral James Richardson was included. Richardson did not support the proposal for a Secretary of the Armed Forces as he was “wary of such powerful positions, fearful of their adversely affecting the Navy. Richardson was also in opposition to an Air Force coequal with the Army and Navy for fear the Navy “would lose its air arm to the Air Force.”<sup>21</sup>

In September 1944 the AAF conducted a study on public relations not to just understand the current public support for the AAF, but more importantly to garner congressional support for the postwar establishment of an autonomous air force.<sup>22</sup> The primary goal of the AAF effort was “to maintain high public confidence in the Army Air Forces during both the remaining months of the war and the postwar period.”<sup>23</sup> By October 1945 the AAF took the official position that an independent air force was necessary for national security and military effectiveness. The AAF developed a strategic communication plan and a roadmap to succeed in the endeavor.

The first theme touted airpower as a force equal to land and sea power. General Spaatz argued in October 1945, “The aeronautical

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<sup>19</sup> James E. Hewes, *From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration*, (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 1975), 134.

<sup>20</sup> Wolk, *Toward Independence*, 10.

<sup>21</sup> Wolk, *Reflection on Air Force Independence*, (Washington DC: Air Force history and Museums Program, 2007), 85.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, (Washington DC: Government Reprints Press, 2001), 45.

<sup>23</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 45.

advance of the past few years has ushered in the 'Air Age.' Its primary force is Air Power. As sea-power was the dominant factor in the destiny of nations in the nineteenth century, so today the dictate is Air Power."<sup>24</sup> This air power did not refer to separate-service air forces; the AAF believed separate-service air forces were "weak air forces—each unable to function as effectively in combat as could a single integrated air force."<sup>25</sup> In his December 1945 address to Congress, President Truman stated, "air power has been developed to a point where its responsibilities are equal to those of land and sea power and its contribution to our strategic planning is great."<sup>26</sup> Another theme in the AAF strategic communication plan predicated the AAF as the "single deterrent to communist aggression during the period when the nation's military was weak in all other aspects."<sup>27</sup> The AAF and the atomic bomb deterred other nations from attacking the US. The third theme regarded strategic bombing as the most important function of an air force and not something to be shared with competing mission sets like control of the seas. Post WWII, the full weight of the AAF's strategic communication plan focused on service independence and attacked the Navy's contrary position. Inter-service rivalry began even before an independent Air Force was formed, as both sides, the Navy and AAF, began campaigns to persuade Congress to support their official position.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower testified before the Senate Military Affairs Committee in November 1945 and emphasized the need for unity of command, the importance of air power in achieving victory and the need for an independent Air Force in the postwar world.<sup>28</sup> In January 1946, Senator Elbert D. Thomas, chairman of the Senate Military Affairs

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<sup>24</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 46.

<sup>25</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 46.

<sup>26</sup> Wolk, *Reflection on Air Force Independence*, 85.

<sup>27</sup> *Brief History of United States Air Force 1907-1953*, Air Force Public Information Letter, Supplement No. 59, Department of the Air Force, Office of Public Information, (1954), 11.

<sup>28</sup> Wolk, *Toward Independence*, 14.

Committee drafted unification legislation despite the Navy's opposition.<sup>29</sup>

The Air Force hired Stephen F. Leo in 1947 as Director of Public Relations. Secretary of the Air Force, Stuart Symington, called Leo "the best young newspaper man I know."<sup>30</sup> The team of Symington and Leo was formidable. Their principal objective was for the Air Force to be seen as "essential" to US security.<sup>31</sup> To achieve that, they had to "overcome the 'slanted' stories put forth to the press by anti-Air Force groups." In regard to PR, Symington was a firm believer in the adage 'don't get mad, get even.'<sup>32</sup> And the Air Force did just that. In March 1948, Navy Captain Red Thackrey headed the staff of the Secretary's Committee on Research on Reorganization (SCOROR)—a departmental group established by James Forrestal to focus on unification issues. Thackrey tabulated articles, speeches, and editorials relating to the Navy and Air Force that had been inserted by members of Congress into the *Congressional Record* from January to March 1948. The Air Force had twenty-eight pro-Air Force and no anti-Air Force pieces inserted, whereas the Navy had eleven pro-Navy and eleven anti-Navy pieces in the *Congressional Record* during that period. This was a clear indicator that "the Air Force had been doing a better job than the Navy of getting its viewpoint across to Congress."<sup>33</sup> Thackrey told the Secretary of the Navy "there is either considerably more natural interest in the Air Force by members of Congress, or the Air Force itself is more assiduous in discharging its responsibility with regard to enlightening public understanding. The latter is believed to be the case."<sup>34</sup>

On July 26 President Harry Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947, officially establishing the United States Air Force as a

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<sup>29</sup> Wolk, *Toward Independence*, 18.

<sup>30</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 50.

<sup>31</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 50.

<sup>32</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 51.

<sup>33</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 52.

<sup>34</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 52.

separate and independent service.<sup>35</sup> The Act set out the requirements for the Air Force to organize, train, and equip forces for “prompt and sustained offensive and defensive air operations.”<sup>36</sup> On the same day, President Truman signed Executive Order 9877 assigning the USAF the primary responsibility of gaining and maintaining air supremacy; establishing local air superiority; conducting aerial defensive operations; and operating the strategic air forces of the US and strategic air reconnaissance.<sup>37</sup>

The National Security Act of 1947 settled the question of unification and called for the creation of a National Military Establishment, later renamed the Department of Defense, which was composed of three services: the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. The Secretary of Defense coordinated these three services. The successful strategic communication campaign of the Air Force solidified its place in the US military, Congress, and the national security arena. Congress appears to have supported an independent and robust Air Force. In a compromising endeavor, however, the National Security Act of 1947 and Executive Order 9877 ensured the Navy retained the Marine Corps and naval aviation. The Act was a major achievement but also an “obvious compromise in which the services yielded on matters of principle to achieve a common goal. Neither the Army, the Army Air Forces, nor the Navy was entirely satisfied with the legislation.”<sup>38</sup> The compromises within the Act led to a Secretary of Defense with little power and a President as the ultimate arbiter between the sister services; thus allowing residual dissatisfaction to manifest as inter-service rivalries plaguing the Department of Defense over the next 60 years. Evidence of this inter-service rivalry or friction occurred on the heels of the National

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<sup>35</sup> Douglas T. Stuart, *Creating the National Security State*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 8.

<sup>36</sup> Wolk, *Toward Independence*, 28.

<sup>37</sup> Arnold, *Global Mission*, 290.

<sup>38</sup> Wolk, *Toward Independence*, 30.

Security Act of 1947 when the Navy and Air Force went head-to-head over major weapon-systems procurements.

### **B-36 v. Flush Deck Carrier**

A few months after the National Security Act of 1947, the rivalry between the Navy and the Air Force intensified over the 1950 defense budget. Once again, the relationship between the Air Force and Congress proved pivotal to the junior service's success.

In February 1949, the Navy briefed General Eisenhower, a military consultant to the Defense Secretary, on "its strategic planning and its thinking on...the Navy's role in national defense...These briefings convinced Eisenhower that the Navy now viewed its main mission as 'projection of American Air power against [the] enemy'."<sup>39</sup> The Navy was investing its strategic future and purpose in a supercarrier, and by February 1949 the construction of the carrier "was an all-but-foregone conclusion. Congress had appropriated the money for its construction the previous June and President Truman had authorized its construction a month later."<sup>40</sup> Louis Johnson replaced Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, and this gave the Air Force the power to seek a reversal of the carrier decision. The Air Force began to lobby the appointed leaders of the military to "prevent Congress from committing itself still further in approving the CVA-58."<sup>41</sup> Secretary Johnson cancelled the flush-deck carrier in 1949, and this action only intensified the rivalry between the Air Force and Navy, as well as the Air Force's strategic communication campaign with Congress.<sup>42</sup>

The cancellation of the *USS United States* flush-deck carrier signified the "extent to which the Air Force's public relations campaign had convinced members of Congress that strategic air power had become

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<sup>39</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 182.

<sup>40</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 183.

<sup>41</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 183.

<sup>42</sup> Stuart, *Creating the National Security State*, 204.

all important to America's defense posture."<sup>43</sup> The Navy tried to fight back. Two members of the Navy Department authored and distributed the 'Anonymous Document' trying to highlight deficiencies with the Air Force's latest acquisition program: the B-36 bomber. The B-36 was designed to be an intercontinental bomber capable of delivering an atomic weapon and providing national defense for the US. This document was delivered to members of Congress and resulted in a House Armed Service Committee (HASC) investigation. Republican James Van Zandt, a long-time supporter of the Navy, introduced a resolution in May 1949 to investigate "aircraft contract awards and cancellations."<sup>44</sup> The investigation and hearings commenced in August 1949, but concluded "not one scintilla, of evidence...that would support charges or insinuations [of] collusion, fraud, corruption, influence of favoritism."<sup>45</sup> The B-36 hearing ended in a major public relations victory for the Air Force.

The relationship between the Air Force and Congress in the late 1940s helped the Air Force solidify its place in the National Military Establishment as a separate, independent, equal service. The victory in the B-36 HASC investigation provided the Air Force with trust amongst members of Congress and helped constitute an effective relationship between the service and the legislative branch. For the first half of the twentieth century the Air Force had a strong, effective relationship with Congress as witnessed in the 1917 appropriations, the successful establishment of an independent Air Force, and the successful procurement of the B-36 bomber.

Throughout the Cold War, the USAF fared well with the legislative branch because it possessed initially the only means to deliver a nuclear

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<sup>43</sup> Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals*, 200.

<sup>44</sup> Jeffrey G. Barlow. *From Hot War to Cold: The US Navy and National Security Affairs: 1945-1955*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 227.

<sup>45</sup> "National Affairs: Meet the Author," *Time*, 05 September 1949, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,933862,00.html>.



weapon, via the strategic bomber, and then, with the acquisition of the Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) mission, two-thirds of the nuclear-triad capability. However, Congress' general support and relatively-amenable relations with the Air Force was under-mined by the Carter administration's struggle with a new bomber in the late 1970s, demonstrating the fragility of the new service's good favor.

### **B-1 Bomber**

The concept for the B-1 aircraft was developed in the 1960s after being requested by Air Force Chief of Staff Curtis LeMay in 1963. It took until 1969 for the Department of Defense to approve the program.<sup>46</sup> The B-1 contract was awarded to North American Rockwell in 1970, and the program was "one of the most hotly debated and intensively lobbied defense projects of the 1970s."<sup>47</sup> Congress also struggled with the program from its inception, and in 1973 the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) cut \$100 million from the Air Force's request for the B-1 expressly to indicate "the committee's dissatisfaction and serious concern regarding the management of [the] program."<sup>48</sup> Like every defense program, the B-1 needed to pass many congressional hurdles. First it had to be authorized by both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, and then be appropriated by both House and Senate defense subcommittees. In 1976 the Ford administration requested a staggering \$1.87 billion to finish research and development on the B-1 and start actual production of the 244 bombers.<sup>49</sup> However, the opponents in Congress knew that once production began, there would be no turning off the B-1. In a compromise, the House and Senate approved the production of the B-1, but agreed that only "limited funds

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<sup>46</sup> Nick Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 93.

<sup>47</sup> Frank P. Donnini, *Battling for Bombers*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 50.

<sup>48</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 126.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Brown. *Flying Blind: The Politics of the US Strategic Bomber Programs*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 260.

would be released, so that the next president could review the decision.”<sup>50</sup>

President Jimmy Carter was inaugurated 20 January, 1977. Carter campaigned to eliminate the B-1, and less than six months into his presidency he did just that.<sup>51</sup> Carter’s decision resulted from the increasing cost estimates and belief that the air-launched cruise missiles (ALCM) and ballistic missiles “provided adequate defense for the nation.”<sup>52</sup> Air Force Chief of Staff, General David C. Jones, said the Air Force would respect the decision of the Commander-in-Chief; the Air Force “would not attempt, publicly or secretly, to undermine the president in Congress. Nor would it collaborate with any congressional attempt to overrule the decision.”<sup>53</sup> However, that was not the case; some members of the Air Force, industry, and Congress refused to admit defeat. After the program’s cancellation, the Air Force continued to divert money for development of the B-1 by disguising it in the budget. Rockwell wanted to protect “an additional \$442 million in the military budget allocated to B-1 research and development;” this money was needed to build research plane number four, which would be the first plane equipped with the full complement of offensive and defensive avionics necessary to penetrate the Soviet Union.<sup>54</sup> To Rockwell’s delight, neither Congress nor the President touched the money, so production on plane number four continued.<sup>55</sup> Rockwell “engaged in some very fancy bookkeeping...and illegally charged some of its B-1 costs to its other government contracts.”<sup>56</sup> This money was not enough to continue the B-1 program though. Rockwell received assistance from

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<sup>50</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 156.

<sup>51</sup> Dennis R. Jenkins. *B-1 Lancer: The Most Complicated Warplane Ever Developed*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 44.

<sup>52</sup> William G. Holder. *The B-1 Bomber*, (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: AERO, 1986), 36.

<sup>53</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 173.

<sup>54</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 181.

<sup>55</sup> Amy Sterling Casil, *The B-1 Lancer*, (New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc, 2003), 10.

<sup>56</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 181.



two senior Air Force generals and two senior political appointees. Most influential was the Secretary of the Air Force, Dr Hans Mark.<sup>57</sup> His Deputy Undersecretary for Research, Engineering, and Space, Dr Seymour Zeiberg was also connected in the subterfuge that kept the B-1 alive. Air Force Lieutenant General Thomas Stafford, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Research and Development and his director of operations, Major General Kelly Burke were complicit in injecting additional money into the B-1 project with funds 'earmarked' for Rockwell.<sup>58</sup> The money was appropriated under the guise of line items such as "penetrations studies," "advanced avionics," "cruise-missile carrier studies," and "radar-absorbent-material studies."<sup>59</sup> The military budget was so vast this "relatively small" amount of money was easily disguised.

In December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, and the United States felt its national security was threatened, providing "rationale for American weapon systems"; Carter called the invasion "the most serious threat to peace since World War II."<sup>60</sup> As the 1980 session of Congress commenced, the House of Representatives voted to approve \$600 million for "development and initial production" of the strategic-weapons launcher, a revised version of the cancelled B-1.<sup>61</sup> This vote did not fool President Carter, and he threatened to "veto the entire defense bill if it contained the bomber appropriation."<sup>62</sup> Carter did not veto the defense bill, and the House and Senate finally agreed on providing \$350 million and a deadline of March 15, 1981 for a new president to develop a new plane or proceed with the revised B-1.<sup>63</sup> In December 1980, Rockwell officials met with President-Elect Reagan to pitch the new administration on the merits of the B-1: "thanks to three years of

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<sup>57</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 181.

<sup>58</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 184.

<sup>59</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 185.

<sup>60</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 190-191.

<sup>61</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 193.

<sup>62</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 193.

<sup>63</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 194.

preparation, with the secret cooperation of the Pentagon, and some members of Congress, [Rockwell] could claim that ‘the B-1 was ready to roll.’”<sup>64</sup>

The first operational B-1 flew on October 1, 1986, at a cost of approximately \$28 billion for 100 aircraft—the most expensive aircraft acquisition ever at the time.<sup>65</sup> Shortcomings in the B-1, lauded as “the best, most capable manned penetrating bomber in the world,” became apparent a few months after the inaugural flight tarnishing “the luster of the Air Force’s achievement.”<sup>66</sup> The US public, Congress, and Secretary of Defense were misled by some senior Air Force leaders, both civilian and military, and professionals in the North American Rockwell company. In a House Armed Services Committee (HASC) investigation in April 1987, chairman Les Aspin said “[the Air Force] screwed it up and didn’t tell us about it.”<sup>67</sup> The Air Force’s deception and deviousness regarding B-1 acquisition hurt its relationship with Congress.

### **Desert Storm and Kosovo**

The Air Force and Congress enjoyed better relations during the decade that included Desert Storm and Operation Allied Force. Desert Storm was one of the most successful applications of air power at the operational level. Air power crippled Iraqi forces before the ground invasion.<sup>68</sup> General Schwarzkopf, commander in chief of US Central Command in 1991, “became convinced that air power could play an unprecedented role in preparing for the liberation [of Kuwait] by ensuring that bloodshed on the ground would be kept to a minimum.”<sup>69</sup> “With a substantial leap of faith, Schwarzkopf moved beyond the traditional AirLand Battle doctrine, which saw air power as only a supporting [force]

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<sup>64</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 199.

<sup>65</sup> Donnini, *Battling for Bombers*, 78.

<sup>66</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 4.

<sup>67</sup> Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 5.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Hallion, *Storm over Iraq*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 188-200.

<sup>69</sup> Olsen, *A History of Warfare*, (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2010), 181.

rather than a dominant element of a military campaign.”<sup>70</sup> Desert Storm was an example of a successful air campaign showcasing air power as “the decisive arm” of military power.<sup>71</sup>

Operation Desert Storm’s major focus was the 43-day air campaign that enabled a short 100-hour ground campaign.<sup>72</sup> This operation was the “first large employment of U.S. air power since the Vietnam war...and perhaps the most successful war fought by the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>73</sup> A mere six years later, the campaign against President Milosevic in Kosovo included an air campaign designed to “halt or degrade a systemic Serb campaign of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo [with the] intent that the air strike would be coercive in nature...providing a strong incentive for Milosevic to halt operations.”<sup>74</sup> Desert Storm and Allied Force also witnessed a resurgence of political involvement in military execution. “Airpower offers the flexibility to influence the whole spectrum from coercion to brute force, as well as the ability to escalate, while at the same time allowing policy makers to vary and – to a degree – control the amount of damage inflicted in accordance with their needs.”<sup>75</sup> Technologies like stealth aircraft and precision-guided munitions “represented an advantage that provided a comparatively low risk [of] casualties and thus became attractive to policy makers.”<sup>76</sup>

Air power secured the objectives of Operation Allied Force and assisted the USAF to become a more powerful organization in the twenty-first century. Allied Force rather than Desert Storm truly marked the

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<sup>70</sup> Olsen, *A History of Warfare*, 181.

<sup>71</sup> Hallion, *Storm over Iraq*, 201.

<sup>72</sup> United States General Accounting Office, A Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Commerce, House of Representatives, *Operation Desert Storm: Evaluation of the Air Campaign*, 12 June 1997, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/gao/nsiad-97-134.pdf>, 14.

<sup>73</sup> United States General Accounting Office, *Operation Desert Storm*, 14.

<sup>74</sup> Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2001), 122.

<sup>75</sup> Dag Henriksen, *NATO’s Gamble*, Annapolis, (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 49.

<sup>76</sup> Henriksen, *NATO’s Gamble*, 48.

“beginning of a new era of air power: in its technology, in the evolution of asymmetric countermeasures, in the impact of humanitarian issues, in its exposure to the international media, and in its application within an uneasy alliance.”<sup>77</sup> The proven capability of airpower technologies like stealth and precision guidance garnered Congressional support for more in stealth aircraft, like the F-22 and Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), and munitions like the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) and the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM). The USAF was “poised to become even more powerful” in the twenty-first century and concluded its last decade on a high note.

### **Tanker Lease**

Less than a decade later, the sparkling image the Air Force gained in the 1990s began to tarnish. The Air Force became embroiled in another acquisition investigation. This time it involved a replacement for the aging KC-135 Stratotankers—a fleet of almost 550 aircraft with an average age of 45 years.<sup>78</sup> The Air Force projected that operations-and-support costs for the KC-135 fleet would grow from \$2.26 billion in 2000 to \$3.4 billion by 2040.<sup>79</sup> The tanker replacement program began in 2002 and is still going on in 2011. Almost a decade of Congressionally directed investigations into the Air Force’s acquisition and procurement procedures have taken their toll on its relationship with the legislative branch. But the Air Force’s relationship to industry was also at stake.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the commercial aircraft industry was facing reduced or cancelled orders due to the “projected declines in air passenger travel.”<sup>80</sup> The Air Force recognized that this presented a unique opportunity to accelerate the tanker-replacement

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<sup>77</sup> Olsen, *A History of Warfare*, 249.

<sup>78</sup> Christopher Bolkcom. “The Air Force KC-767 Tanker Lease Proposal: Key Issues for Congress.” CRS Report for Congress. 2 September 2003, <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RL32056.pdf>, 1.

<sup>79</sup> Bolkcom. “The Air Force KC-767.” 2.

<sup>80</sup> United States General Accounting Office, A Briefing for Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 May 2002. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02724r.pdf>, 1.

program. James Roche, Secretary of the Air Force in 2001, explained the tanker lease option as “a unique business opportunity to get the best pricing possible to address our critical need for a multi-mission aircraft that can carry gas and also do all kinds of other things. ...This is not a bail out, but taking advantage of a buyer’s market.”<sup>81</sup> The tanker is the backbone of the Air Force. It is a force-extender that makes global reach and global power possible. Tankers increase the amount of time combat aircraft can remain on-station. In response to the commercial aviation opportunity, Congress incorporated language in section 8159 of the fiscal year 2002 Defense Appropriations Act permitting the Air Force to establish a multiyear pilot program for leasing Boeing 767 aircraft.<sup>82</sup> The Air Force sought a lease arrangement to “kick start” recapitalization of the tanker fleet by allowing replacement to start at least three years sooner than purchase, and also allow the Air Force to acquire 100 aircraft approximately six years earlier than purchases based on the 2002 AF procurement plans.<sup>83</sup> Part of the reason for this earlier need was the increase in flying hours in the post—9/11 national security environment; flying hours increased 45% in FY 2002 compared to the same period in FY 2001.<sup>84</sup> The Air Force was negotiating lease arrangements with Boeing in May 2002, ensuring it conformed to legislation, or where required, asking for legislative changes to ensure the leasing arrangement was advantageous to the government.<sup>85</sup>

The enabling legislation giving the Air Force the authority to lease tankers was included in the afore-mentioned FY 2002 Defense

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<sup>81</sup> Bolkom. “The Air Force KC-767.” 5.

<sup>82</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Inspector General – Audit. “Acquisition of the Boeing KC-767AA Tanker Aircraft.” Report No. D-2004-064 (PDF), 29 March 2004. <http://www.dodig.mil/audit/reports/fy04/04064sum.htm>.

<sup>83</sup> United States General Accounting Office, A Briefing for Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 May 2002. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02724r.pdf>, slide 8.

<sup>84</sup> United States General Accounting Office, A Briefing for Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 May 2002. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02724r.pdf>, slide 8.

<sup>85</sup> United States General Accounting Office, A Briefing for Senate Armed Services Committee, 15 May 2002. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d02724r.pdf>, slide 7.

Appropriations Act, but was subsequently continued in the supplemental section 308 of the FY 2002 Defense Appropriation Act as well as in Sections 133 and 8117 of the FY2003 Defense Appropriations Act.<sup>86</sup> Together these provisions provided authority for a lease that differed in the normal procedures for major DOD acquisition programs by: 1) “specifying that a particular acquisition method can be used (i.e., a lease of a commercial asset, which would make it an operating rather than a capital lease or a procurement)”; 2) specifying the number and type of aircraft to be leased; 3) exempting the lease from requirements that normally govern leases of ships and aircraft in accordance with Section 2401 and 2401a of US Code Title 10; 4) exempting the lease from a limit established in “31 USC 1553(b)(2) on the amount of appropriations that...can be charged to closed-out appropriation accounts” 5) exempting the Air Force from the “Buy American” requirements of the Berry Amendment (US Code Title 10 Section 2533a); and 6) establishing a special congressional approval process where approval would be through authorization and appropriation language, “or through a new start notification to be approved by the four congressional defense committees at any time.”<sup>87</sup> A new start reprogramming notification is typically a way to realign funding from one approved program to another, usually an unfunded requirement. A new start reprogramming notification was “an unusual if not unprecedented way to approve a major procurement program since reprogramming or transfers of funds between appropriations are generally used for minor adjustments to ongoing programs.”<sup>88</sup>

On July 10, 2003, the Air Force submitted the report required by Section 8159 of the FY 2002 Defense Appropriations act to the four congressional defense committees listing the specific lease terms and

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<sup>86</sup> Bolkcom. “The Air Force KC-767.” 8.

<sup>87</sup> Bolkcom. “The Air Force KC-767.” 8.

<sup>88</sup> Bolkcom. “The Air Force KC-767.” 9.



conditions. There is a 30 calendar-day stipulation from the submission of the report before the Air Force could begin leasing aircraft. Immediately after the report, the Air Force also submitted a new start for reprogramming of the tanker lease essentially transferring funds previously appropriated within the Air Force budget.<sup>89</sup> Three out of the four defense committees approved the new start; however, the Senate Armed Services Committee and Senate Commerce Committee requested a hearing on the proposed tanker lease for September 2003 prior to providing approval for the Air Force to begin procurement.

One apparent question asked in the Senate hearings was the cost-benefit to the government for leasing versus buying new tanker aircraft for the Air Force. In the Air Force's own calculations "the total program cost of the proposed lease [was] \$24.6 billion compared to \$20.7 billion for a non-multi-year buy in current dollars."<sup>90</sup> The Air Force acknowledged the substantial cost of leasing versus buying but contended that "resources are not available to fund a buy in the next several years because of other program demands."<sup>91</sup> Senator John Warner, Chairman of the SASC, refused to authorize the proposal and through hearings and investigations the SASC "unearthed a crushing body of evidence on how much a folly the proposal actually was."<sup>92</sup>

The Department of Defense (DOD) Inspector General (IG) released findings regarding the acquisition of the Boeing KC-767A Tanker Aircraft in report D-2004-064 in March 2004.<sup>93</sup> The IG report had somewhat conflicting findings. "There was no compelling reason why the Air Force

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<sup>89</sup> House, *The Air Force Tanker Lease Proposal*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., H. Doc. 108-14. [http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/security/has204000.000\(1\)/has204000\\_of.htm](http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/security/has204000.000(1)/has204000_of.htm)

<sup>90</sup> Bolkcom. "The Air Force KC-767." 56.

<sup>91</sup> Bolkcom. "The Air Force KC-767." 56.

<sup>92</sup> John McCain, Senator- AZ. "Statement on US Air Force Accountability Regarding the Boeing 767 Tanker Lease Deal." 19 November 2004. [http://mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.Speeches&ContentRecord\\_id=c0a22919-287a-4f7b-b3cc-49b8a93cb0a5&Region\\_id=&Issue\\_id.](http://mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.Speeches&ContentRecord_id=c0a22919-287a-4f7b-b3cc-49b8a93cb0a5&Region_id=&Issue_id.)

<sup>93</sup> Bolkcom. "The Air Force KC-767." 3.

should not proceed with the tanker lease program” but the IG also called into question the procurement strategy and “identified five statutory provisions that had not been satisfied by the lease agreement. The IG also found that the Air Force didn’t demonstrate best business practices, or provide sufficient accountability to justify the lease.”<sup>94</sup> One of the most damaging findings for the Air Force was the unethical and criminal behavior of Darleen Druyun, the former lead Air Force negotiator on the program who was secretly negotiating an executive job with Boeing while overseeing the \$30 billion deal for the tanker-lease program.<sup>95</sup> Darlene Druyun was sentenced to nine months in prison on public corruption charges. In court papers accompanying her sentencing, Ms Druyun “admitted to overpricing Boeing’s 767s as a ‘parting gift’ to Boeing. She admitted that she did this to ‘ingratiate herself’ with her future employer and help secure employment for her daughter and future son-in-law” with the Boeing company.<sup>96</sup> Senator John McCain, a member of the SASC, said the tanker lease problem “appears to be a case of either a systemic failure in procurement oversight, willful blindness, or rank corruption. Either way, full accountability among Air Force leadership is in order.”<sup>97</sup> The same week that Senator McCain issued that quote on the floor of the Senate, Secretary of the Air Force James Roche resigned.

Senator McCain felt “accountability among Air Force leadership has been inadequate.”<sup>98</sup> McCain offered six points where he felt Air Force leadership was deplorable with the tanker lease proposal: 1) he believed the Air Force was never “interested in doing a formal ‘analysis of alternatives’ for the multibillion dollar tanker program;” 2) Air Force

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<sup>94</sup> Bolkom. “The Air Force KC-767.” 3.

<sup>95</sup> McCain, “Statement on US Air Force Accountability Regarding the Boeing 767 Tanker Lease Deal.”

<sup>96</sup> McCain, “Statement on US Air Force Accountability Regarding the Boeing 767 Tanker Lease Deal.”

<sup>97</sup> McCain, “Statement on US Air Force Accountability Regarding the Boeing 767 Tanker Lease Deal.”

<sup>98</sup> McCain, “Statement on US Air Force Accountability Regarding the Boeing 767 Tanker Lease Deal.”



leadership “misrepresented to Congress [by over-embellishing] how bad corrosion afflicted the current tanker fleet;” 3) the Air Force overstated the operation and support cost-growth estimates for the current tanker fleet to “artificially bolster the case” for the immediate need to replace the tanker fleet; 4) Air Force leadership “repeatedly misrepresented that its proposal was merely an ‘operating lease.’;” 5) according to the DOD Inspector General (IG), ‘the commercial procurement strategy that Air Force leadership used in the tanker proposal...places the Department at ‘high risk for paying excessive prices’ and precluded ‘good fiduciary responsibility for DOD funds.’; and 6) the IG found that the Air Force let Boeing tailor tanker specifications to “Boeing’s proposed tanker.”<sup>99</sup> In McCain’s closing remarks he quoted the Air Force Core Values: Integrity first, Service before Self, and Excellence in All we Do; “When it comes to Air Force leadership’s conduct regarding the Tanker Lease Proposal and related congressional probes,” McCain asked, “where is the accountability and the responsibility; where is the honesty and the honor; where have these core values been over the past three years, and where are they now? To eschew accountability...is to do a profound disservice to the good men and women who wear the uniform of the United States Air Force honorably, capably, and proudly.”<sup>100</sup> Ultimately the tanker lease program and DOD-IG findings blemished and crippled the Air Force’s relationship with Congress. “Darlene Druyan did more damage to the AF than anyone can account for. The nation is still having to deal with contracts today that she was the signatory on.”<sup>101</sup> The issues surrounding the tanker lease resulted in the replacement program, the KC-X, being taken over by OSD and highlighted the need

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<sup>99</sup> McCain, “Statement on US Air Force Accountability Regarding the Boeing 767 Tanker Lease Deal.”

<sup>100</sup> McCain, “Statement on US Air Force Accountability Regarding the Boeing 767 Tanker Lease Deal.”

<sup>101</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

for the Air Force to undertake actions to mend its relationship with Congress.

### **KC-X**

Fast-forward almost a decade and the third round of the tanker replacement program was still causing turmoil between the Air Force and Congress. On February 10, 2010, DOD released a new Request For Proposal (RFP) for a program to build 179 new KC-X aerial refueling tankers, a contract valued at \$35 billion. This program was given to the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics because of the previous issues regarding the tanker lease program and tanker replacement program. The RFP met considerable challenges. Senator Richard Shelby (R-Ala) said: “the final RFP discredits the integrity of the entire process. Additional capabilities that would better protect the lives of our men and women in uniform were neglected in the draft RFP. Substantial changes that bring those factors into consideration in the final RFP are necessary to have a full and transparent competition yet the Air Force did not make a single revision to the key warfighter requirements. The RFP clearly favors a smaller, less capable airframe...It is an illusion of a fair competition in which the warfighter and the taxpayer lose.”<sup>102</sup> Senator Shelby had considerable interest in the outcome of the tanker contract award as his state, Alabama, is home of EADS North America who was competing against Boeing for the contract. Senator Shelby’s comments indicated a perception of unfairness to EADS North America. However, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates believed “this was a very transparent, forthright process” and the Air Force labored this time to avoid mistakes.”<sup>103</sup> On

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<sup>102</sup> William Matthews. “Boeing Backers Pleased with Tanker RFP Specifications.” *Air Force Times*, 24 February 2010,

[http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2010/02/airforce\\_tanker\\_reaction\\_022410w/](http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2010/02/airforce_tanker_reaction_022410w/).

<sup>103</sup> Nathan Hodge. “EADS Won’t Contest U.S. Tanker Decision.” *The Wall Street Journal*, 5 March 2011.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703580004576180531071032832.html>.

February 24, 2011 Boeing was awarded the KC-X contract<sup>104</sup> and on March 5, 2011 the Wall Street Journal reported that EADS North America decided not to contest the award to Boeing.<sup>105</sup> The Air Force has awarded a contract and can begin, finally, with the replacement of the KC-135 fleet. A decade-long debacle over the KC-135 replacement has put considerable pressure on the relationship between the Air Force and Congress. Perceptions of dishonesty and lack of accountability and responsibility of Air Force leaders with congressional members have taken a toll on the positive relationship the Air Force appeared to have with Congress throughout most of the twentieth century.

### **Changes in the Air Force Leadership**

Two issues, nuclear stewardship and acquisition foibles, precipitated a shakeup in top Air Force leadership. The deterioration of nuclear stewardship involved a B-52 accidentally flying live nuclear missiles from Minot, ND across the US to Barksdale AFB, LA and sitting on the “tarmac for several hours before anyone realized what happened, some 30 hours after the mistake” of loading the missiles onto the aircraft had occurred.<sup>106</sup> General Moseley ordered a service-wide review of the nuclear enterprise immediately following this event, but a mere seven months later, the Air Force discovered it had mislabeled nuclear warhead fuses, leading to the classified components being accidentally shipped to Taiwan in 2006.<sup>107</sup> Many pundits believe the Taiwan incident was the trigger for scrutiny but it was not just nuclear issues that put heat on the SECAF and CSAF. These incidents followed “a series of high-profile scandals and disagreements between Air Force leadership and [Defense Secretary] Gates in the past year, during which both the Pentagon and

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<sup>104</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs). “Air Force Announces KC-46A Tanker Contract Award.” 24 February 2011. <http://www.defense.gov/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=14292>.

<sup>105</sup> Hodge. “EADS Won’t Contest U.S. Tanker Decision.”

<sup>106</sup> “Moseley and Wynne Force Out.” *Air Force Times*. 5 June 2008. [http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/06/airforce\\_moseleywynne\\_060508w/](http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/06/airforce_moseleywynne_060508w/).

<sup>107</sup> “Moseley and Wynne Force Out.”

congressional leadership have increasingly expressed frustration about the Air Force's top bosses."<sup>108</sup> Other grievances included major acquisition programs stalled by protests, "the service's inability to rush more surveillance drones to the war zones," apparent conflicts of interest among General Moseley and other active duty and retired senior Air Force officials related to a \$50 million contract to produce a multimedia show for the United States Air Demonstration Squadron, the Thunderbirds, (known as Thundervision), and "repeated clashes with Pentagon leaders over the number of F-22s the Air Force will buy and other budget issues."<sup>109</sup>

In June 2008, both the Michael W. Wynne, Secretary of the Air Force, and General T. Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, resigned at the request of Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates.<sup>110</sup> Secretary Gates said, "The stewardship of our nuclear deterrent is the most sensitive mission that we have...the declining standards...in my view required strong action."<sup>111</sup> The firing of the SECAF and CSAF did not just affect the internal dynamics of the Department of Defense. The Air Force's relationship with Congress became more tenuous.

Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, released a statement praising Gates' decision. "Secretary Gates' focus on accountability is essential and had been absent from the Office of the Secretary of Defense for too long," the statement says. "The safety and security of America's nuclear weapons must receive the highest priority, just as it must in other countries. The Secretary took appropriate action following the reports of the Defense Science Board, the Air Force's own internal review, and now most recently, the report of

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<sup>108</sup> "Moseley and Wynne Force Out."

<sup>109</sup> "Moseley and Wynne Force Out."

<sup>110</sup> Julian E. Barnes and Peter Spiegel. "Air Force's Top Leaders are Ousted." *Los Angeles Times*. 06 June 2008. <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jun/06/nation/na-airforce6>.

<sup>111</sup> Barnes and Spiegel. "Air Force's Top Leaders are Ousted."

Admiral Donald.”<sup>112</sup> Representative John Murtha, chairman of the House Defense Appropriations subcommittee (HAC-D) agreed with Gates’ decision stating “There is nothing more important than the security of nuclear weapons, and it appeared that the Air Force investigation was not thorough.”<sup>113</sup> A few months prior to the resignation of General Moseley, Chairman Levin, and Ranking Member of the SASC, Senator John McCain, asked the DOD’s Inspector General office to “review the conduct of current and former senior Air Force officials...for criminal conduct, possible ethical violations and failures of leadership” regarding their role in the \$50 million Thunderbird Airshow Production Services (Thundervision) contract.<sup>114</sup> The IG report concluded “Gen Moseley provided preferential treatment to a contractor...created the appearance of improper disclosure of nonpublic information to [the contractor]...misused subordinates’ time and Government property...and solicited and accepted gifts from a prohibited source.”<sup>115</sup> The report recommended the Secretary of the Air Force consider “appropriate corrective action with regard to Gen Moseley.”<sup>116</sup> Michael Donnelly, Secretary of the Air Force, issued a letter of admonishment to retired General Moseley in October 2009. The Air Force was rocked by a series of missteps during 2008; Moseley and Wynne’s relationship’s with

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<sup>112</sup> “Moseley and Wynne Force Out.” The Pentagon’s “independent” Defense Science Board conducted a review of the Air Force’s efforts to improve safety, security, and proficiency of its nuclear bomber wings. This report was in addition to the Air Force’s own internal review and remediation of its nuclear enterprise. Most recently, Admiral Donald was assigned to investigate the nuclear missile fuses that were accidentally shipped to Taiwan. The report depicts a “pattern of poor performance” within the Air Force according to the Secretary of Defense. (Speech by Secretary Gates on June 05, 2008).

<sup>113</sup> “Moseley and Wynne Force Out.”

<sup>114</sup> John A. Tirpak. “Moseley Admonished, Rejects Conclusion of Wrongdoing.” *Air Force Magazine*. 8 October 2009. <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/Features/personnel/Pages/box100809Moseley.aspx>

<sup>115</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Inspector General. “Alleged Misconduct: General T. Michael Moseley, Former Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force.” 10 July 2009. [http://www.dodig.mil/fo/Foia/PDFs/H08L107249100\\_071009\\_Black.pdf](http://www.dodig.mil/fo/Foia/PDFs/H08L107249100_071009_Black.pdf).

<sup>116</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Inspector General. “Alleged Misconduct: General T. Michael Moseley.”

Secretary Gates and members of congressional defense committees steadily eroded as a result.

Interaction in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with Congress and the Air Force was fraught with difficulty and marred by unethical behavior. The path to rehabilitation will be slow, but it will rely on: 1) a robust strategic message campaign; 2) ethical behavior; and 3) the institutions and processes the Air Force has developed for interacting with Congress.



## Chapter 2

### Congressional Oversight and OSD

#### **Congressional Oversight**

Congress is intimately involved with the Armed Forces at many levels. The Constitution provides Congress the power to organize the executive branch of the US Government. Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution allocates Congress' power under the "necessary-and-proper" clause.<sup>117</sup> The Congressional Research Service summarizes the authority this clause gives the Congress: "Congress has the authority to create, abolish, reorganize, and fund federal departments...It has the power to assign or reassign functions to departments and agencies, and grant new forms of authority and staff [to executive officials]...[and] exercises ultimate authority over executive branch organization and...policy."<sup>118</sup>

Between 1815 and 1940 the major threats to US national security were few and remote, and many thought a large standing military force was threatening to continual peace.<sup>119</sup> A professional military officer corps emerged in the later part of the nineteenth century in the United States, notably much later than in most other major European countries. After the development of the professional military officer, the interaction of officers in the political sphere faded from the realm of military affairs and precipitated separation between civil and military sectors. After World War II, the threat of the Cold War to national security produced "five major changes in the traditional pattern of civil-military relations, according to Andrew Goodpaster and Samuel Huntington; the first was a "tremendous qualitative and quantitative change in the instrumental

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<sup>117</sup> The Constitution of the United States, Article I, Section 8. 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2009, S. Doc 111-4.

<sup>118</sup> John Haskell, *Congress in Context* (Philadelphia, PA: Westview Press, 2010), 149.

<sup>119</sup> Andrew J. Goodpaster and Samuel P. Huntington. *Civil-Military Relations* (Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977) 9.



roles of the armed forces;” a large standing military was necessary to ensure national security.<sup>120</sup> Second, “the economic role of the military expanded tremendously” with the military establishment commanding “approximately 10 percent of the gross national product.”<sup>121</sup> Third, the constant threat to national security and need for a large standing military required new governmental institutions to assist in organization and control of the military establishment. The National Security Acts of 1947 and 1949 were pivotal in legitimizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff and created the Department of Defense.<sup>122</sup> Fourth, this period saw “an end to the earlier isolation of the military establishment from other important segments of American society.”<sup>123</sup> Fifth, and perhaps most important, “because it was in a sense a precondition for these other changes, major shifts took place in the attitude of the American public and elites toward the military services and military force.”<sup>124</sup> The political and military elites in the post WWII US environment shared “an understanding and appreciation of the role of military force with respect to foreign policy” and many career officers moved into civilian roles within the government, forging strong bonds and relationships between the congressional and executive branches of US government.

The most notable example of congressional oversight authority and power occurred in the restructuring of the War and Navy Departments in 1947 through the National Security Act. Not only did this create the Air Force, but it also consolidated the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force under one organization.<sup>125</sup> Congress, as the elected representatives of the people, also has the responsibility to provide oversight ensuring the “efficient, wise, and honest stewardship of taxpayers’ money” as the

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<sup>120</sup> Goodpaster & Huntington. *Civil-Military Relations*, 9.

<sup>121</sup> Goodpaster & Huntington. *Civil-Military Relations*, 9.

<sup>122</sup> Douglas T. Stuart. *Creating the National Security State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 1-3.

<sup>123</sup> Goodpaster & Huntington. *Civil-Military Relations*, 10.

<sup>124</sup> Goodpaster & Huntington. *Civil-Military Relations*, 11.

<sup>125</sup> Haskell, *Congress in Context*, 149.



elected representatives of the people.<sup>126</sup> The current and future structure of the Air Force is ultimately dependent on its ability to provide open, honest, and transparent interactions with the Congress. In order to understand the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of the US Government some historical context is imperative.

### **Executive Power and Legislative Oversight**

#### *Historical power & development of LL*

The Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 marked a “decisive change in the executive-legislative” relationship by formally shifting the “initiative for developing the fiscal and legislative program of the national government from the legislature to the presidency.”<sup>127</sup> Since this Act, Congress has operated within the constructs of a plan developed and proposed by the chief executive – the President. In order to effectively develop a national budget, the president created a central office responsible for clearing the final budget and coordinating the associated staff. In 1947, this coordination and clearance acquired a new dimension. At the request of the President Truman, the Budget Bureau assumed responsibility for “the President’s legislative program” with the Employment Act of 1946.<sup>128</sup> With this Act, the executive branch initiated the three major messages delivered to Congress at the start of each session that hold true today: the state-of-the-union address, the budget request, and the annual economic report.<sup>129</sup> The legislative proposals from each governmental department, like today’s Department of Defense, involved coordination with the President to represent a unified approach to Congress and the country. With a single-combined budget, Congress sought organizational expertise regarding some legislative proposals set

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<sup>126</sup> Haskell, *Congress in Context*, 259.

<sup>127</sup> William C. Banks and Peter Raven-Hansen. *National Security Law and the Power of the Purse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 47.

<sup>128</sup> Abraham Holtzman. *Legislative Liaison: Executive Leadership in Congress*, (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1970), 7.

<sup>129</sup> Tollestrup, Jessica. “History and Authority of the Joint Economic Committee.” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. 6 December 2010. <http://www.llsdc.org/attachments/files/262/CRS-R41519.pdf>

before it. Legislative liaison emerged as a subordinate organization within the military and other governmental organizations to inform the legislative branch on organizational specifics.<sup>130</sup> Legislative liaison assisted Congress in the increasing “face of the volume, complexity, and range of legislation confronting” the legislative branch with a single Presidential Budget Request.<sup>131</sup>

The initial step for legislative liaison was the “establishment of budgetary controls at the departmental level under the impact of the Budget and Accounting Act...Acceptance of the concept of legislative programming at the...secretarial levels and the strengthening of the office of the general counsel...within the departments represented a second step.”<sup>132</sup> It was in the general counsel’s office that legislative liaisons ultimately developed in a number of departments as a separate responsibility of leadership requiring a specialized staff. The Hoover Commission in 1947 endorsed legislative liaison as a responsibility of the secretaries of the departments and sought to accommodate these military offices on Capitol Hill.<sup>133</sup> The complexities of legislation required full-time undertaking. “Legislative liaison was not a part-time duty that could be shunted off on existing staff. Recommendation 16 [of the Task Force Report on Foreign Affairs from the Hoover Commission] called for a coordinated program of congressional liaison under the supervision of an assistant secretary with no other obligations.”<sup>134</sup> The “special congressional liaison officers who finally emerged were attached directly to the secretaries...or placed under a political assistant secretary” as seen within the Department of Defense today. Within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), legislative liaison functions are the responsibility of the politically-appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense

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<sup>130</sup> Holtzman, *Legislative Liaison: Executive Leadership in Congress*, 9.

<sup>131</sup> Holtzman, *Legislative Liaison: Executive Leadership in Congress*, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Holtzman, *Legislative Liaison: Executive Leadership in Congress*, 9.

<sup>133</sup> Estes Kefauver and Jack Levin. *A twentieth-Century Congress* (New York: Essential Books, 1947), 149.

<sup>134</sup> Holtzman, *Legislative Liaison: Executive Leadership in Congress*, 13.

(ASD) for Legislative Affairs (LA). Within the Air Force, legislative liaison functions report directly to the Secretary of the Air Force. Understanding the development of legislative liaison functions within the executive branch is a prerequisite to delve into the relationship between the Air Force and Congress, but first a basic outline of Congressional organization is necessary.

### **Congressional Structure**

In order to understand the Air Force's interactions with Congress it is first necessary to understand the organization of the legislative branch. It is not just Representatives and Senators. 535 voting members currently comprise the two houses of Congress. It would be impossible for a Congressman to be intimately familiar with the thousands of bills presented to Congress each year, so Congressmen are reliant on Congressional Staff to assist in daily activities and to maintain corporate knowledge. Staffs are categorized as personal staff or committee staff. Personal staffs are assigned to a specific member and work directly in that member's office. A typical House personal staff consists of fifteen people with approximately half deployed to work in the district office. A Senator's personal staff averages 40 people with approximately one-third working in district offices across the member's state.<sup>135</sup> Committee staffs work for all the members, of the majority or minority party, for a particular committee. Committee staffs enable congressional oversight by administrative process with bureaucratic accountability.<sup>136</sup> Committee staffs are unique—no two-committee staffs are alike. Most committee staffs are divided along political party lines where the majority has two-thirds of the staff positions and the minority receives one-third. Committee staffs are the "principal work units of Congress. With few exceptions, the House and Senate debate and act

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<sup>135</sup> *Strictly Congress: A Practical Guide*. The Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University. 14.

<sup>136</sup> Arthur Maass. *Congress and the Common Good* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1983), 40.

only on their recommendations.”<sup>137</sup> One senator called his committee staff “the idea factory because staffers can be a major source of legislation.”<sup>138</sup> The relationship between Congressmen and committee staff highlights the importance of the relationship between committee staff and Air Force representatives.

Committee staffs are also separate along the lines of authorizers and appropriators. This division affects the civil-military relations between Congress and the organizations within the Department of Defense. The two authorizing committees the Air Force works with are the House and Senate Armed Services Committees (HASC and SASC). The two appropriations committees are the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees for Defense (HAC-D and SAC-D). The HASC and the SASC historically are the preeminent committees, combining extensive interest in policy and administration; where the House military appropriations subcommittee uses the “budgetary process for the detailed probing of military administration,” and the Senate military appropriations subcommittee attempts “a more general consideration of military policy.”<sup>139</sup> The division between authorizers and appropriators causes a corresponding division within the Air Force. By law, a separate budget office, under the Service comptroller, is required to deal specifically with the budget and appropriations committees. This is accomplished with Air Force Legislative Liaison (SAF/LL) working with the HASC and the SASC, and Secretary of the Air Force Directorate for Financial Management and Comptroller (SAF/FM) working with the congressional appropriations committees, the HAC-D and SAC-D.

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<sup>137</sup> Abraham Holtzman. *American Government: Ideals & Reality* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1984), 190-191.

<sup>138</sup> *Strictly Congress: A Practical Guide*, 16.

<sup>139</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 403.

## **Authorizers vs. Appropriators**

The first codification of Congressional intent regarding the separate liaison function with the Congressional Budget and Appropriations Committees occurred in 1970. As part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 1971 Defense Appropriations Bill, the House of Representatives added report language expressing the clear intent of separation between liaison functions. Committees publish a report to provide detailed guidance to departments and agencies for an accompanying bill. This report is often referred to as *report language*. Report language can include “detailed spending instructions, directives, and sometimes, spending restrictions...These committee reports primarily focus on congressional priorities and areas of disagreement with the President.”<sup>140</sup>

In 1971, the House added report language reiterating “its belief that the work of the Appropriations Committee is most effectively accomplished through the Comptroller and Budget Office organizations of the Department of Defense and the Military Services rather than through other channels, including legislative liaison offices. From time to time, efforts are made to fragment this responsibility within the Department. Such efforts only serve to complicate and delay the business of the Committee. Any such changes should be initiated by the Committee and not by the Department.”<sup>141</sup> This type of language was reiterated in 1972 with the FY 1973 Defense Appropriations Bill, but it identified the need for budgeting expertise; “personnel assigned to this Committee liaison function should be experienced in budget work. It is imperative that this practice be continued.”<sup>142</sup> The Senate followed suit in 1978 with report language contained in the FY78 Defense Appropriations Bill; “While always reserving the right to call upon all

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<sup>140</sup> Sandy Streeter. “Appropriations Bills: What is Report Language.” CRS Report for Congress. 12 January 2005.

[http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metacrs7624/m1/1/high\\_res\\_d/98-558\\_2005Jan12.pdf](http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metacrs7624/m1/1/high_res_d/98-558_2005Jan12.pdf)

<sup>141</sup> HR 91-1570, *FY71 DOD Appropriations Bill*. 91st Cong., 2nd sess., 1970.

<sup>142</sup> HR 92-1389, *FY73 DOD Appropriations Bill*. 92nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1972.

organizations of the defense establishment for assistance, the primary interface of the appropriations committees and the Department of Defense necessarily must be through the budget offices and comptroller organizations.”<sup>143</sup> The Senate articulated it’s right to call on any organization, but maintained the necessity for the SAC-D liaison function to be maintained within budget channels, through SAF/FM for the Air Force.

Report language has continually reiterated the need for separate liaison functions, and the Air Force has even been reprimanded for trying to consolidate liaison functions into SAF/LL. In 1988, the Senate for the first time, codified that language in the bill making it law in Title 10, 102 STAT 1834, Section 122: “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of the Air Force is required to maintain legislative liaison to the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Military Construction and budgetary and financial management of the Military Construction and Military Family Housing appropriations in a manner identical to the method employed as of September 30, 1986.”<sup>144</sup> The method employed as of September 30, 1986 is liaison functions under SAF/FM for the Appropriations Committees, which are separated from other liaison functions within the Air Force organized under SAF/LL. The Congressional reasoning for having SAF/FM liaise with the appropriators rests on budgetary expertise.

Most of the interactions between the services and Congress revolve around the budget cycle, so to understand how and why the interactions are important, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the budgetary cycle for the services, emphasizing the Air Force’s budgetary process.

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<sup>143</sup> SR 95-325, *FY78 DOD Appropriations Bill*. 95th Cong., 2nd sess., 1977.

<sup>144</sup> Raymond P. Clark. “Congressional Summary Regarding the Consolidation of Congressional Liaison Functions.” 21 October 2009, 5.



## Budget Process

The Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution system (PPBE) is a DOD process designed to produce the DOD portion of the President's Budget (PB). SECDEF Robert McNamara established the PPBE in the 1960s.<sup>145</sup> Secretary McNamara introduced a business-model approach to the Defense Department by adding programming to "what was previously a disjointed planning budgeting system."<sup>146</sup> The defense budgeting process "essentially reflects civil-military relations in the United States – i.e., the dominance of the civilian over the military."<sup>147</sup> McNamara's system provided the link between strategic planning for the services and the annual budget, but also increased civilian control over the military.<sup>148</sup> The result of this linkage allows resource allocation in a systematic way as well as demanding the "departments and agencies define clearly the major objectives (or 'programs') which they choose to pursue...apply systemic analyses to the alternative ways in which these objectives...may be sought and...plan their spending in long-range terms."<sup>149</sup> As part of the PPBE, DOD created the concept of the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) to provide a multi-year focus for defense programs. Annually each service prepares a service budget (formally known as the Budget Estimate Submission or BES) for the Office of the Secretary of Defense's (OSD) consolidated DOD budget request. OSD Comptroller is the lead organization during the consolidated budget phase of PPBE.<sup>150</sup> A joint budget review is conducted between the Office of Management and

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<sup>145</sup> SAF/LLZ, "Congressional Action Team Action Officer Handbook." 4.

<sup>146</sup> Congressional Action Team Action Officer Handbook, 4.

<sup>147</sup> Alex Mintz. *The politics of Resource Allocation in the US DOD* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 24.

<sup>148</sup> Mintz, *The politics of Resource Allocation in the US DOD*, 24.

<sup>149</sup> Mintz, *The politics of Resource Allocation in the US DOD*, 27

<sup>150</sup> Department of the Air Force. *Introduction to PPBE: PPBE and AFCS Primer*. Spring 2009, 10.



Budget (OMB) and OSD to develop a Program Budget Decision (PBS) for inclusion into the President's Budget (PB) request.<sup>151</sup>

Within the Air Force, PPBE "is a shared process...with significant responsibility delegated to the Director of Programs, Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs (AF/A8P) and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Budget (SAF/FMB).<sup>152</sup> The Air Force develops a Program Objective Memorandum (POM) as the primary document "to frame program proposals. The POM includes an analysis of missions, objectives, alternative methods to accomplish objectives, and allocation of resources."<sup>153</sup> The POM allows the Air Force to change the contents of the FYDP through budgetary disconnects, initiatives, and offsets. Disconnects occur when an approved program or part of an approved program becomes unexecutable due to a mismatch between resources provided and the approved program content. Initiatives refer to a new program not yet approved or funded in the FYDP, or a change in an approved program's content that requires additional funds. An offset defines resources identified to "pay" for disconnects or initiatives.<sup>154</sup> SAF/FMB will reconcile data from the POM into an annual service budget and submit it to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). At this point, the budgets of the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps are reviewed and consolidated into the annual DOD budget.

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<sup>151</sup> *Introduction to PPBE*, 10.

<sup>152</sup> *Introduction to PPBE*, 1.

<sup>153</sup> *Introduction to PPBE*, 35

<sup>154</sup> *Introduction to PPBE*, 55

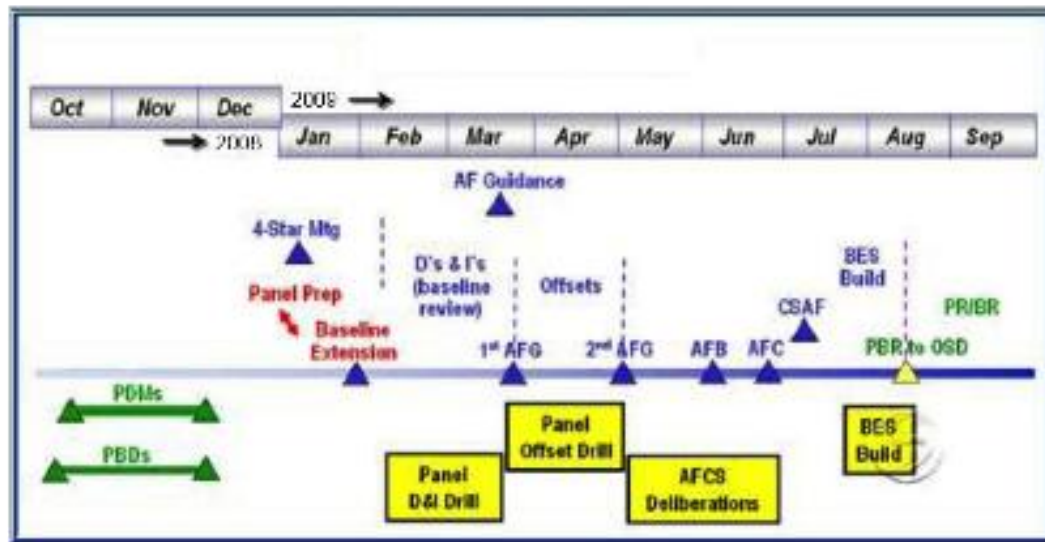


Figure 1: The POM Year Schedule  
Source: Introduction to PPBE, page 36.

The President submits a budget request to Congress after the annual State of the Union address in January. After the budget is submitted, Congress holds hearings before the HASC, SASC, House Appropriations Committee (HAC), and the Senate Appropriations Committee (SAC) for the civilian and military leadership of the Department of Defense and the individual services. The SECAF and CSAF testify before the four authorizing and appropriations committees. The Air Force leaders present the Air Force's annual posture statement outlining the strategic focus for the service in the upcoming year. Congress reviews the President's Budget, hearing testimonies, specific program details, and finally signs into law the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) specifying the budget and expenditures of DOD and the subordinate service budgets. A separate Defense Appropriations Act will also be signed into law highlighting the liaison need for both authorization and appropriation committees.

### **Service Liaison Relationship with OSD/LA**

The relationship between Office of the Secretary of Defense, Legislative Affairs (OSD/LA) and the services is not exactly hierarchical,

as one would expect. OSD/LA works closely with the services, but the daily interactions do not place the services in a subservient role. The services act autonomously in most cases, but ultimately the true responsibility for all legislative affairs within the entire Department of Defense rests with the politically appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs (ASD/LA).

Section 138 (5) of Title 10, US Code stipulates the appointment from “civilian life by the President” for one of the ten Assistant Secretaries of Defense to be responsible for legislative affairs.<sup>155</sup> The main responsibility of the ASD/LA is “the overall supervision of legislative affairs of the Department of Defense.”<sup>156</sup> As defined in US Code, the office is responsible for all of DOD – including “the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of DOD, the DOD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities in the DOD.”<sup>157</sup>

DOD Directive 5142.01, September 15, 2006, defines the roles and responsibilities of the ASD/LA. This directive “provides guidance for centralized direction, integration, and control of DOD legislative affairs and liaison activities with the U.S. Congress.”<sup>158</sup> The directive defines legislative liaison as activities that involve “direct, daily, and personal contact on a continuing basis made by representatives of the Department of Defense with members and committees of the U.S. Congress and their staffs for the purpose of presenting, justifying, and defending the DOD, or a DOD Component’s, legislative program.”<sup>159</sup> DOD policy states “all legislative liaison activities shall be centrally directed and carefully

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<sup>155</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 138 : US Code - Section 138 (5): Assistant Secretaries of Defense.  
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

<sup>156</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 138 : US Code - Section 138 (5): Assistant Secretaries of Defense.  
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

<sup>157</sup> Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 5142.01, *Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs (ASD(LA))*, 15 Sep 2006, 1.

<sup>158</sup> DODD 5142.01, 1.

<sup>159</sup> DODD 5142.01, 2.

coordinated with the ASD/(LA) prior to execution.”<sup>160</sup> The ASD(LA) develops an integrated DOD legislative strategy “supporting the Administration’s policy agenda and the DOD legislative program, priorities, and goals.”<sup>161</sup> The coordination between OSD/LA and the services meets the intent of this policy. Weekly staff meetings between ASD/LA and the service LL/LA offices occur to discuss service direction and ensure it is consistent with the Secretary of Defense’s priorities. Historically, there have been cases when services executed LL activities not in concert with OSD priorities. When this occurs, the hierarchical relationship stipulated in Title 10 of the US Code becomes apparent. OSD/LA will redirect service actions if required to ensure actions are always in concert with the President’s budget request and priorities.<sup>162</sup>

The ASD(LA) has the authority to “communicate requirements directly with the Heads of the DOD components, as necessary, to carry out assigned responsibilities and functions, including the transmission of requests for advice and assistance.”<sup>163</sup> Communication to the military departments is directed through “the Secretaries of the Military Departments” or their designees which US Code provides to the Offices of Legislative Affairs or Liaison.<sup>164</sup>

The daily responsibilities of OSD/LA focus on the Secretary of Defense’s priorities requiring focus and attention. This allows the service autonomy in directing it’s own legislative functions except where assistance is required from OSD. OSD/LA typically manages interactions with Congress for “DOD programs on the SECDEF’s priority list, a Joint program between numerous military departments or DOD components, or any program that is highly publicized within the DOD

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<sup>160</sup> DODD 5142.01, 2.

<sup>161</sup> DODD 5142.01, 2.

<sup>162</sup> Colonel William M. Tart, USAF, former ASD(LA) senior military assistant, interview by the author, 22 March 2011.

<sup>163</sup> DODD 5142.01, 4.

<sup>164</sup> DODD 5142.01, 4.

organization.”<sup>165</sup> An example of a joint program is the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), a 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighter and joint endeavor of the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. Examples of highly contentious programs include the tanker leaser program, KC-X, Army Future Combat System (FCS), and the Marine Corps Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV).<sup>166</sup>

Another example of OSD/LA taking the lead amongst the military departments includes one of the largest initiatives of the Secretary of Defense in 2010; “to generate efficiency savings by reducing overhead costs, improving business practices, or culling excess or troubled programs” with all DOD components.<sup>167</sup> OSD/LA took the lead on coordinating the service inputs and compiling a single DOD message delivered to Congress prior to release of the President’s FY12 budget request.<sup>168</sup>

## **Summary**

Congressional oversight is given to the legislative branch in the Constitution, and the degree of oversight has grown during our nation’s history. This increase in oversight requires a corresponding need for specialists to provide Congress with expertise on departmental programs. The internal organization of personal staff, committee staff, and the split of authorizers and appropriators are infrequently understood by the public and military officer. Education in these areas is important to understand the need for legislative liaison functions and the division between budgetary work and authorization liaison. The interactions between the executive and legislative branches revolve around the annual budgetary cycle, and McNamara’s revamp of the DOD process in the 1960s still operates today with few revisions. A brief introduction to

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<sup>165</sup> Colonel Tart, USAF, interview by the author, 22 March 2011.

<sup>166</sup> Colonel Tart, USAF, interview by the author, 22 March 2011.

<sup>167</sup> Robert M. Gates, Statement on Department Budget and Efficiencies (speech, Pentagon, Washington DC, 06 January 2011).

<http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1527>

<sup>168</sup> Gates, Statement on Department Budget and Efficiencies.

<http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1527>

the budgetary planning system is key to understanding how and why the Pentagon interacts with Congress as well as understanding the relationship between the services and OSD Legislative Affairs.



## Chapter 3

### Air Force Legislative Liaison

The upcoming Congressional hearings are critical to our service. They allow us to justify our programs and budget...Ultimately, our readiness, modernization, and quality of life measures hinge upon our success in convincing Congress of the value of our programs.

Sheila E. Widnall

“The civil society is the source of the funds, resources, and manpower from which the military forces and their supporting establishment are built and sustained. The government—that is, the executive, through the formulation and management of the budget, and the Congress, through legislative authorization and appropriations—determines not only what resources will be made available for military purposes but also...how they are to be structured into programs and forces in being.”<sup>169</sup> A legislative-liaison function is necessary for the Air Force to clearly, openly, and effectively communicate its program requirements to support national security. The Air Force has a formally established structure ensuring interactions with Congress are readily available, but informal structure is also necessary to communicate the Air Force’s strategic priorities and posture. Formal interactions include: Secretary of the Air Force Directorate for Legislative Liaison (SAF/LL), Secretary of the Air Force Directorate for Financial Management and Comptroller (SAF/FM), annual Congressional hearings for the President’s Budget, confirmation hearings of military and civilian Defense Department leaders, and questions for the record (QFR). Some less

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<sup>169</sup> Andrew J. Goodpaster and Samuel P. Huntington. *Civil-Military Relations* (Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977), 33.



formal and informal interactions include: Congressional Requests for Information (RFI), the Air Force Commander Capitol Hill Visit Program, and Congressional Delegation (CODEL) visits to Air Force Bases across the world.

SAF/LL is the focal point for matters associated with the preparation and justification of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).<sup>170</sup> SAF/LL works with Congressional authorizers on the House and Senate Armed Service Committees and Intelligence Committees. The Director of Budget (SAF/FMB) oversees the congressional activity associated with the annual Defense Appropriations Bill. SAF/FMB serves as the expert budget liaison between the Air Force and the House and Senate Appropriations subcommittees, the HAC-D and SAC-D. Since authorizations are necessary to secure appropriations, this paper will focus on the former and illustrate by example.

The Air Force Posture Statement is an annual report used as the guiding document for SAF/LL and SAF/FMB when communicating the Air Force's position, requirements, and strategic force structure. The Air Force requested a FY11 budget of \$119.6 billion dollars to achieve the proper balance between "providing capabilities for today's commitments and posturing for future challenges."<sup>171</sup> The Air Force built its FY11 budget request to best achieve the four strategic priorities detailed in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The Air Force hopes that its posture statement will help guide Congress, but the Congressional authorization and appropriation committees must also take into account all the national agencies, the overall Presidential budget request, and concerns about national resources. The power of the purse held by Congress requires the Air Force to communicate its needs effectively,

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<sup>170</sup> SAF/LLZ, "Congressional Action Team Action Officer Handbook." 3.

<sup>171</sup> Department of the Air Force. Fiscal Year 2011 USAF Posture Statement, 9 February 2010, 14. <http://www.posturestatement.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-100223-010.pdf>

efficiently, clearly, and unequivocally. In reality, requirements exceed budget, which creates a need for subjective choice in prioritizing funding. This is the root of the argument within DOD and with Congress. To achieve the proper capabilities to provide national security, continuity of message, positive interactions, and personal relationships are required between the service and Congress.

### **Governing Directives**

The responsibility, mission, and organization of SAF/LL are documented through public law, Department of Defense Directive, Air Force Instruction, and Headquarters Air Force (HAF) Directive. The organization of SAF/LL is based on the following documents: Title 10 , US Code, section 8013-8016, DOD Directive (DODD) 5400.4 and 5142.01, Air Force Instruction (AFI) 90-401, and HAF Mission Directive 1-22.

Title 10, US Code, section 8014 (b) (5) provides authorization for the office of Chief of Legislative Liaison.<sup>172</sup> Section 8014 (c) (1) provides “the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force [with] sole responsibility within the Office of the Secretary and the Air Staff for...Legislative affairs.”<sup>173</sup> DODD 5400.4 (Jan 30 1978) reissues reference to “update DOD policies and procedures governing the furnishing of information, both classified and unclassified, to the Congress.”<sup>174</sup> This directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Military Departments, the Unified and Specified Commands, and the Defense Agencies.<sup>175</sup> This directive stipulates the importance of Congress receiving “adequate information concerning all Government programs and operations” for proper functioning of the US

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<sup>172</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 8014 : US Code - Section 8014: Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

<sup>173</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 8014 : US Code - Section 8014: Office of the Secretary of the Air Force. <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

<sup>174</sup> Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 5400.4, *Provision of Information to Congress*, 30 January 1978, 1.

<sup>175</sup> DODD 5400.4, 1.

Government.<sup>176</sup> Air Force Instruction 90-401 (1 July 1998) provides “guidance and procedures for Air Force personnel who respond to inquiries from and interact with the Congress. It describes the responsibilities of the HQ USAF, major command (MAJCOM), and field operating agency (FOA) organizations in providing information to the Congress on various inquiries or requests.”<sup>177</sup> Air Force policy is to cooperate fully with the Congress, and to give full and timely responses to congressional inquiries.<sup>178</sup>

AFI 90-401 defines the responsibilities of the Office of Legislative Liaison (SAF/LL) including: developing, coordinating, and supervising the Air Force legislative program, ensuring accuracy and consistency on all Air Force information intended for the Congress, keeping members and committees of the Congress advised of Air Force activities in their area of interest, evaluating, reporting, and disseminating pertinent legislative information to the Air Force, preparing witnesses for congressional hearings, supervising congressional travel arrangements and requirements designated as official responsibility of the Air Force, and supporting Wing Commanders during Congressional member visits.<sup>179</sup>

The final directive governing functions of SAF/LL derives from HAF Mission Directive 1-22 ( 3 October 2007). This directive places the “overall responsibility for legislative affairs and Congressional relations for the Department of the Air Force” within SAF/LL.<sup>180</sup> The Secretary of the Air Force clearly retains “ultimate responsibility for all policies related to the Department of the Air Force.”<sup>181</sup> SAF/LL “provides guidance, direction, and oversight for all matters pertaining to the formulation, review and execution of plans, policies, programs, and

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<sup>176</sup> DODD 5400.4, 2.

<sup>177</sup> Air Force Instruction (AFI) 90-401, *Air Force Relations with Congress*, 1 July 1998, 1.

<sup>178</sup> AFI 90-401, 2.

<sup>179</sup> AFI 90-401, 2.

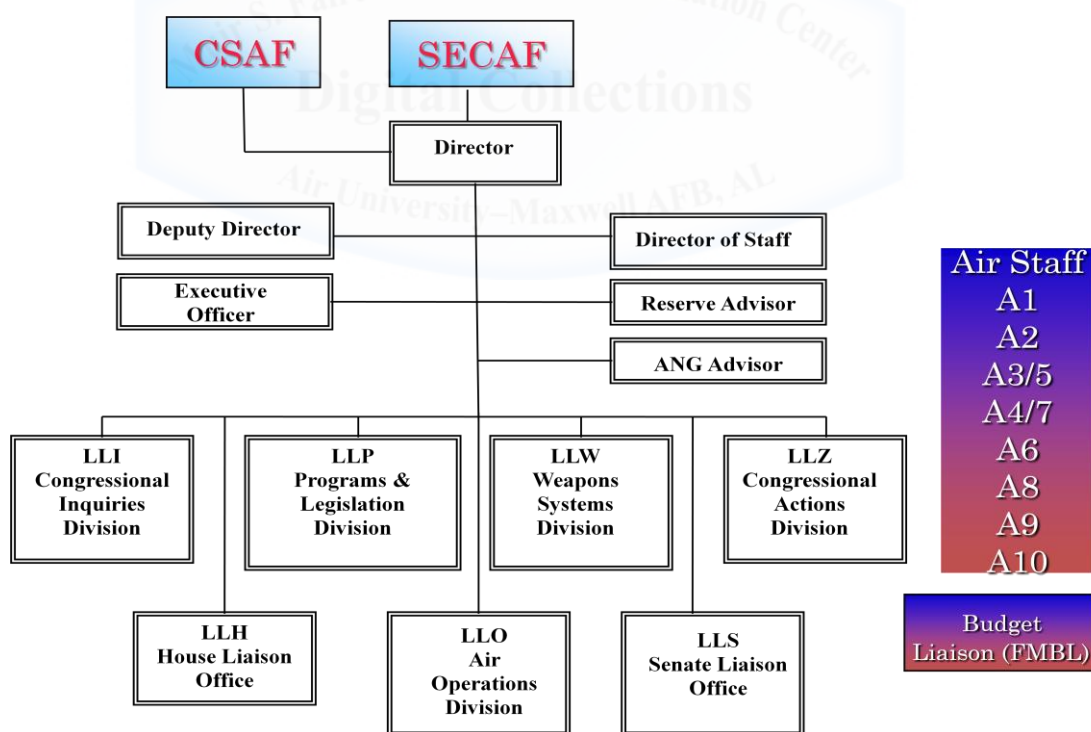
<sup>180</sup> Headquarters Air Force Mission Directive (HAF MD) 1-22, *Legislative Liaison*, 3 October 2007, 1.

<sup>181</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 1.

budgets relative to the Air Force legislative program.”<sup>182</sup>

### SAF/LL Organization

SAF/LL is divided into seven subordinate offices. One key directorate, Congressional Action Division (SAF/LLZ) develops and articulates the Air Force position on certain key issues ensuring a favorable climate with Congress, the Administration, and the public. SAF/LLZ is responsible to the top-four leaders of the Air Force: Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF), Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), Under Secretary (USECAF), and the Vice Chief of Staff (VCSAF). This division, SAF/LLZ, is a consolidation of two previously existing SAF/LL divisions: SAF/LLR- Research Office and SAF/LLX-Air Force Issues Team.<sup>183</sup> Reductions in headquarters staff manning required a consolidation of these offices under the newly formed LLZ.<sup>184</sup>



<sup>182</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 5.

<sup>183</sup> Robert Vellella. *The Organization and Functioning of the Legislative Liaison Offices of the Military Departments* (Monterey, CA: Naval Post Graduate School December 1990), 21.

<sup>184</sup> Thomas Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011.

Figure 2: Air Force Legislative Liaison Organizational Chart  
Source: Air Force Legislative Liaison

SAF/LLZ is the office of primary responsibility (OPR) for: 1) developing, coordinating, and articulating the Air Force's position on current issues; 2) managing the preparation and support to the SECAF and CSAF's annual congressional testimony; 3) orchestrating follow-up requirements to authorization testimony; and 4) organizing and directing the Air Force Posture Team to assist the Air Force's interactions during Congressional hearings.<sup>185</sup> The Air Force Legislative Affairs Posture Team consists of representatives from each Assistant Secretariat and Air Staff directorate. "Posture Team members ensure the accuracy of support materials such as briefings, issue papers, transcripts...and other documents prepared within their agencies."<sup>186</sup> The Posture Team provides SAF/LLZ with ready access to the Air Staff and Secretariat when expeditious responses to the Congress are required. SAF/LLZ is responsible for matters pertaining to "developing and executing Air Force legislative strategies on major national security issues."<sup>187</sup>

LLZ develops a congressional calendar and engagement plan to promulgate "a proactive, flexible, and synchronized" message identifying overarching themes, including legislative priorities and potential landmines.<sup>188</sup> The Air Force views its engagement plan as a five-tiered strategy. These include the top-four leadership (SECAF, CSAF, USECAF, and VCSAF) interactions as the top tier, subordinate to them in hierarchical order are: the Major Command (MAJCOM) leadership engagements; the Air Staff directorate interfaces, such as the A3/5 responsible for Operations, Plans, and Requirements; the Wing

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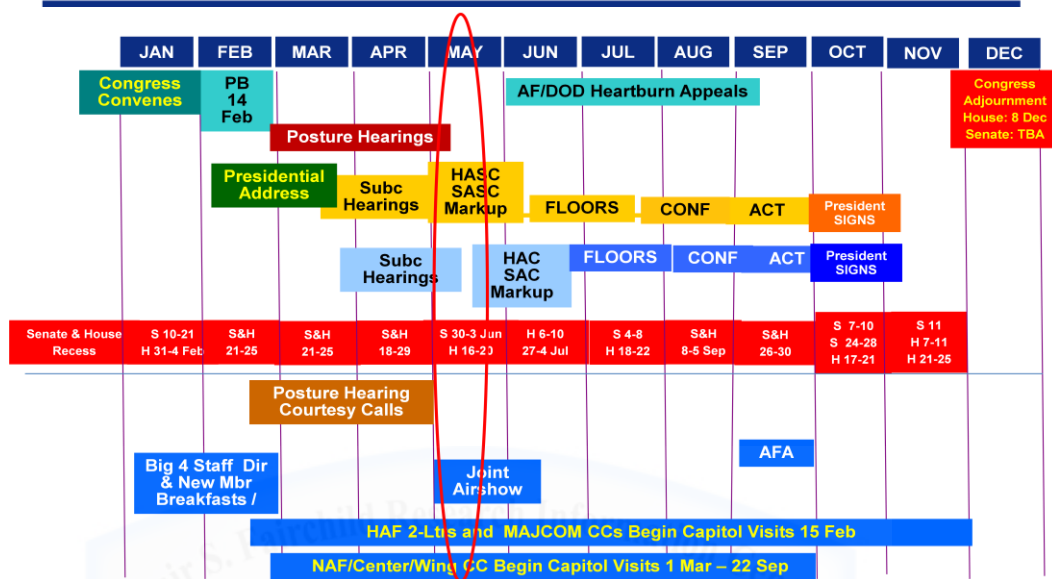
<sup>185</sup> SAF/LLZ, "Congressional Action Team Action Officer Handbook." 3.

<sup>186</sup> SAF/LLZ, "Congressional Action Team Action Officer Handbook." 3.

<sup>187</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 6.

<sup>188</sup> Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011

## SAF/LL Rhythm Congressional Calendar



LLZ is also the lead division for the Chief of Staff-directed Wing Commander Capitol Hill Visit Program, discussed in more detail later in this chapter. LLZ has the unique responsibility of providing legislative research, analysis, and dissemination of Air Force-wide information on Congressional issues and activities.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011

received from OSD/LA addressed to the Secretary of Defense, letters to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force.<sup>192</sup> SAF/LLI is also the office of responsibility for managing the Air Force's Legislative Fellowship program, discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Two other offices in the Pentagon, LLW and LLP, play important roles. LLW is responsible for all of the weapons systems programs and associated program budget requests (excluding appropriation matters) in the Air Force; where as LLP is responsible for "all Air Force programs, legislation, and associated program budget requests (excluding appropriation matters) except for weapons systems."<sup>193</sup> Both LLP and LLW work with the authorization committee staffs for the House and Senate, and SAF/FMBL coordinates the needs of the appropriation committee staffs ensuring the Air Force works in accordance with United States Code Title 10, 102 STAT 1834, Section 122.<sup>194</sup>

SAF/LLP prepares Air Force leaders for testimony before the HASC, SASC, and other committees as required and prepares associated hearing resumes.<sup>195</sup> LLP is also a direct link between field commanders and Congress. The division "assigns, monitors, and expedites Secretariat and Air Staff actions in formulating responses to members' inquiries and those on behalf of constituents concerning Air Force programs."<sup>196</sup> A distinctive responsibility of LLP is to coordinate and make congressional announcements on base closures, force structure realignments, competitive sourcing studies and results, civilian reductions-in-force, contract awards of \$5 million or greater, and environmental impact studies and results.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> HAFMD 1-22, 6.

<sup>193</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 6.

<sup>194</sup> Raymond P. Clark. "Congressional Summary Regarding the Consolidation of Congressional Liaison Functions." 21 October 2009, 5.

<sup>195</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 6.

<sup>196</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 6.

<sup>197</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 6.



SAF/LLW also prepares senior Air Force leaders for annual testimony before the HASC, SASC, and both the House and Senate Intelligence Committees.<sup>198</sup> SAF/LLW serves as a direct link between Wing Commanders and Congress regarding acquisition and performance of weapons systems, and executing the operational missions of the Air Force.<sup>199</sup>

The final legislative liaison office in the Pentagon is SAF/LLO, Air Operations division. This is a support section designed to assist in the numerous travel requirements between the Air Force and Congress. SAF/LLO “serves as the single point of contact to receive, coordinate, and process all travel requirements for Members of Congress, Congressional Committees, and Congressional Staff members when such travel is assigned to the Air Force by DOD, or at the invitation of the Secretary of the Air Force.”<sup>200</sup>

SAF/LL has two offices on Capitol Hill: LLS (Senate Office) and LLH (House Office). These offices work directly with the House of Representatives and Senate personal staffs. SAF/LLH and SAF/LLS deal with all facets of legislative activity and act as the primary military escorts during travel for respective House and Senate delegations.<sup>201</sup> The officers assigned to each of these offices are charged with meeting the needs of the legislative branch and accurately representing the needs of the Air Force. There are formal interactions for these officers, but the informal interactions and personal relationships built are the foundation for a positive, supportive Congressional relationship with the Air Force.

The LL House office, LLH, is task-organized to support Members of the House of Representatives and their personal staffs. There are a total of six personnel assigned including a senior-level chief, a colonel; a deputy chief, a lieutenant colonel; two action officers (AO), either major

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<sup>198</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 7.

<sup>199</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 7.

<sup>200</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 6.

<sup>201</sup> HAF MD 1-22, 6.

or lieutenant colonel; also two legislative assistants, an enlisted E-7 and a government support scheduler/office manager. Additionally, there is an AO from SAF/FM matrixed into the office to handle appropriator issues.

LLH interacts with Congress - proactively and reactively. The value of personal relationships cannot be overstated when interacting with Members and their staff. To build these relationships each Congressional office is assigned an officer from LLH as a point of contact that facilitates interaction and supports the office's Air Force informational needs. Proactively, LLH focuses on the Members assigned to the HASC and their Military Legislative Assistants (MLAs). LLH has a comprehensive Division Engagement Plan that exposes the Member and MLA to Air Force priorities. On a bi-monthly basis LLH will host a Subject Matter Expert (SME) brief on an Air Force mission or program for any available Congressional personnel; the March/April 2011 focused on "Partnering with Joint/Coalition Team to Win Today's Fight."<sup>202</sup> LLH also hosts a monthly follow-up social to encourage informal interactions. Supporting congressional travel also reinforces high priorities. In a reactionary vein the house office fields requests for information (RFI) from Member's Offices and relay those to the appropriate LL SME offices within the Pentagon, such as LLW or LLP.

Integration of operations among Capitol Hill, the LLH office, the Pentagon, LLW and LLP is complex and difficult to explain – “there is no ‘right’ answer.”<sup>203</sup> Overlap between the House office with the programs and weapons directorates on key issues exists, and it benefits the Air Force for the House office to maintain awareness on these issues to provide expedient answers to a Member's Staff while communicating a consistent message. The relationship between “military legislative

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<sup>202</sup> Colonel Todd Harmer, USAF, SAF/LLH Director, interview by the author, 25 March 2011

<sup>203</sup> Colonel Harmer, USAF, SAF/LLH Director, interview, 25 March 2011

assistants (MLAs) and professional staff members (PSMs) is tenuous.”<sup>204</sup> PSMs rarely deal with MLAs, unless through the direction of the committee Chairman or at the request of the Member. This congressional division mirrors the separation of LL divisions. The division between committee and personal staff does not require a similar divide in interaction amongst LL personnel. A close working relationship between the LL divisions on Capitol Hill with those in the Pentagon ensure a consistent message.

The LL Senate office, LLS, is organized similarly to LLH by providing support to the Members of the Senate and their personal staffs. There are five full-time personnel assigned, including a senior level chief, a colonel, a deputy chief, a lieutenant colonel, two action officers (AO) (either major or lieutenant colonel), and a government support scheduler/office manager. Additionally, there are three Air Force Reservists serving as Individual Mobilization Augmentees.<sup>205</sup>

The office prioritizes action officers by first focusing on the Members assigned to the SASC, then to other committees like Foreign Relations, next to the AF Caucus, and finally states with Air Force interests. Regular office calls are designed to maintain relationships but AOs also look at informal meetings over coffee or lunch as a way to connect and build personal relationships. As with LLH, there is little interaction between LLS and the LL offices within the Pentagon, like LLW and LLP. If there is a “shared interest or involvement” between personal staffs and committee staff, coordination occurs between LLS and LLW or LLP respectively.<sup>206</sup> The LLS division director is continually trying to improve the coordination and consistency of message between the PSMs and personal staff to ensure a single voice from the Air Force to Congress.

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<sup>204</sup> Colonel Harmer, USAF, SAF/LLH Director, interview, 25 March 2011

<sup>205</sup> Colonel Bradley Spacy, USAF, SAF/LLS Director, interview by the author, 29 April 2011

<sup>206</sup> Colonel Spacy, USAF, SAF/LLS Director, interview, 29 April 2011

On balance, the organizational structure of Air Force Legislative Liaison appears robust, comprehensive, well coordinated, and sufficient to the task at hand. If anything the operation is bedeviled by details more than infrastructure.

### **Formal Interactions**

#### Staffer Days

Every year the Under Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition (SAF/AQ) hosts Professional Staff Members (PSMs) from the HASC, SASC, HAC-D, and SAC-D at the Pentagon for Staffer Days. This day includes briefings on the PSM's Air Force portfolio. The Program Element Monitor (PEM) is the Air Staff's "corporate memory and is the spokesperson for individual programs."<sup>207</sup> The PEM is the indispensable link between the MAJCOMs, the Air Staff, and OSD. "The PEM is the primary program advocate" and as such briefs the Congressional PSMs on the current budget request and program specifics for each particular weapons system or Air Force program. This environment allows PSMs to ask specific and detailed questions, on the progress of Air Force programs. Staffer Day briefings occur around March to assist Congress in understanding the requested allocation for Air Force programs in the President's budget request prior to any congressional committee markups (amendments) of the appropriation or authorization bills. Marks against the budget can increase, decrease, add, or eliminate a specific item in the President's budget. Staffer Day briefs again bring continuity of message from different people within the Air Force to the members of Congress by reiterating Air Force priorities developed by the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff found in the Posture Statement. The interaction also specifies these priorities as they relate to Air Force programs. Staffers typically interact with SAF/LL and SAF/FMBL, but

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<sup>207</sup> Department of the Air Force. *Introduction to PPBE: PPBE and AFCS Primer*. Spring 2009, 17.

Staffer Days offer a deeper level of understanding from experts with intimate information on .

### Legislative Fellowship

The relationship between the Air Force and Congress is not solely reliant on senior leaders or SAF/LL and SAF/FMB. Intermediate Development Education (IDE) opportunities benefit this relationship. The Air Force has an IDE program where a major, O-4, spends a year working on the personal staff of a Representative or Senator. This provides an Air Force officer with inside perspective of how Congress works. It also benefits members of Congress and their staffs with personal interactions and expertise from an Air Force officer. The inside story of what the Air Force 'is' can be related first-hand. All four services and the Coast Guard sponsor this legislative fellowship programs. How the Air Force capitalizes on this experience is discussed in a later chapter.

Another IDE opportunity unique to the Air Force is the Air Force Intern Program. This is a small program that accepts approximately 20 officers annually. The interns accomplish two rotations during their year in the Pentagon. There are numerous opportunities to work in the legislative liaison or legislative affairs offices of the Air Force, Joint Staff, and Office of the Secretary of Defense. These six-month rotations also provide a better understanding of the DOD relationship with Congress and the importance of the executive-legislative interaction.

### **Informal Interactions**

#### AF Commander Capitol Hill Visit Program

One informal interaction program designed by the Air Force is the annual Air Force Commander Capitol Hill Visit Program. The CSAF implemented this program in 1998 to build long-term, face-to-face relationships with members of Congress and their staffs. The program also helps deliver a consistent Air Force message. In accordance with AF Instruction (AFI) 90-401, wing commanders are required to visit their

Congressional delegations annually. Although not required, Numbered Air Force (NAF) and Major Command (MAJCOM) Commanders are highly encouraged to make periodic visits to Capitol Hill. As elected representatives, congressmen are responsible to the men and women of their district. Members of the armed forces are part of that constituency whether as formal registered voters of the area or as members at large in the community. Congress appreciates the wing commanders' unique perspective and credibility from the field. This program is a critical element of the Air Force – Congressional relationship. Commanders' support and participation are essential to successfully articulate and educate the members of Congress on the Air Force's priorities, requirements, personnel, and missions.<sup>208</sup>

Another very important informal interaction between the Air Force and Congress is the relationship built between members assigned to SAF/LL and SAF/FMB with the personal and professional staff members. Open, transparent interactions are built on trust and familiarity. Working directly with the professional staff members (PSMs) on the HASC or SASC can directly impact the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Air Force budget, and the achievement of the Air Force strategic goals by clearly, honestly, and expediently providing requested information to Congress.

#### Congressional Travel

The Air Force Commander Capitol Hill Visit Program brings military members to Capitol Hill, but travel occurs in both directions. Congressmen and women, their personal staffs, and professional committee staffs often travel the country to see Air Force people, places, and equipment. Congress is not a PowerPoint organization, and prefers to get out, see things, and talk to Airmen directly. Committee staffers

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<sup>208</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Jennifer Chandler, USAF, SAF/LLZ, bullet background paper on Air Force Commander Capitol Hill Visit Program, to the author, e-mail 27 January 2011.

typically understand issues better after visiting an Air Force Base and seeing the appropriation or authorization at work. Time on the road assists in breaking down formal barriers; any congressional delegation (CODEL) to an Air Force base requires an escort from SAF/LL or SAF/FMBL. Time in casual settings enables communication, builds rapport, and trust. These trips are crucial to developing positive relationships as well as directly educating Capitol Hill on how the Air Force accomplishes the mission.

In the past, one of the most organized CODELs visited Nellis Air Force Base, NV every other year. It was known as the Fire Power Demonstration. This CODEL emphasized the kinetic capabilities of air power. The commander of the USAF Warfare Center in 2009 evolved the demonstration from a firepower demo to an Air Power Demo. He wanted to showcase all of the Air Force's capabilities and not just the kinetic effects of an F-15E or A-10. He constructed an integrated scenario involving remotely piloted aircraft, moving vehicles, and A-10s; a scenario similar to what occurs in wars such as Afghanistan and Iraq. He also developed static displays encompassing video vignettes to showcase missions like aero-medical evacuation and humanitarian support. The Air Power Demo took a large contingent from Washington DC to Nellis AFB for a busy two day trip. For many staff members this was the first real introduction to the Air Force in action. The trip was priceless in building their knowledge of Air Force capabilities, however it also was very pricey. In 2009, the demonstration was cancelled for fiscal reasons and will most likely not occur in 2011 for the same reasons.

#### **Personnel Policies: Manning, Hiring, Tour duration**

Legislative liaison is nearly fully manned, demonstrating the worth the Air Force places on the LL mission. In contrast, at large Air Force staff manning has decreased over the past decade based on operational tempo.



The hiring process for legislative liaison is ‘selectively manned’ meaning every position filled in LL is sponsored by a senior officer and requires a by name request (BNR) for a specific individual before the person is hired or the position filled.<sup>209</sup> Action Officers (AO) fill the majority of positions within the LL organization and are responsible for a specific portfolio within their assigned LL division. For example, in LLW there is one officer responsible for all programs involving fighter aircraft, weapons, and trainer aircraft.

The division directors within LL, as well as the Deputy Director, and Director of LL work together to fill openings within the LL organization. The hiring process is a balance of individuals offered to LL by the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) and the people a director or division head worked with during previous assignments. According to the current LLW division commander, the right person for placement in LL is a person who is “humble, credible, and approachable.”<sup>210</sup> These terms are often spoken within the Air Force and are grounded in the USAF Weapons School as the goal for Weapons Instructor Course graduates. This mantra is key to building successful relationships with Capitol Hill with approachability of the utmost importance. In many hiring cases, AFPC will present LL with a short list of officers who could fill a position based on career progression, timing, experience, availability, and senior-officer support (which comes from developmental team recommendations). Once LL has this list, hiring is based on resume reviews, interviews, and background knowledge of the individual. Division commanders look to an individual’s previous squadron commanders and peers to gain an understanding of personal attributes. SAF/LL portfolios are managed by a single individual and vast in scope (i.e., F-15C, F-22, JSF, A-10, AIM120, AIM-9X, T-6, JDAM, SDB, etc in

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<sup>209</sup> Major Megan Kinne, USAF, SAF/LL Executive Officer, interview by the author, 4 April 2011

<sup>210</sup> Colonel Patrick McKenzie, USAF, SAF/LLW Director, interview by the author, 23 March 2011

just one portfolio). A person who is credible within her Air Force career is necessary to answer informal educational questions asked by Congress, and to assist in developing good working relationships with committee and personal staff members. Background intelligence on a person also provides insight into a person's approachability. LL is about building relationships, and an approachable officer is paramount to successful relationships.

There is a balance in hiring though. In many cases previous Pentagon experience is beneficial to the LL directorate. Another balancing function is an individual's career progression versus continuity within LL. Does LL hire the major who is a school graduate, selected one or two years early for promotion because that individual exemplifies humility, operational expertise, and personal approachability but who will most likely be in the office for 12 months before being selected for squadron command? Or should LL choose the person who is a school graduate but on-time to lieutenant colonel who may have slightly less operational expertise but will remain in the LL position for 24 months? Over the past few years, the Air Force has transitioned personnel out of the LL organization prior to a standard two-year assignment. Many personnel have filled positions for only 12 months. It is difficult to build job knowledge of the LL position and build worthwhile relationships in such a short period of time.

#### Training Program

Upon assignment and arrival to SAF/LL, officers receive an action officer orientation led by LLZ. This one-day orientation explains terminology, congressional organization, SAF organization and responsibilities, as well as details of the mission. Officers have the opportunity to take a course offered by the Government Affairs Institute (GAI) at Georgetown University.<sup>211</sup> The course is the Congressional

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<sup>211</sup> Thomas Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011.

Operations Seminar, a five-day offering providing a “comprehensive look at the congressional processes and organization, and at how Congress affects the daily operations of every department and agency in the executive branch.”<sup>212</sup> Participants in the course hear from Members of Congress, congressional committee and personal staff, political scientists, lobbyists, and news media.<sup>213</sup> Despite the academic introduction given by LL and the GAI course, most of the learning for a newly assigned LL officer occurs in the introductions to the members on Capitol Hill.

### **Summary**

Understanding the organization of the Air Force Secretariat responsible for interacting with Congress as well as the formal and informal interactions between Air Force members and Congressional members is essential to determining the effectiveness of legislative liaison. The next chapter will outline the processes for the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps to determine similarities, differences, and possible recommendations to better the Air Force’s Congressional Engagement Plan. On the surface, the structure, organization, and coordination of formal and informal activities of Air Force Legislative Liaison appear adequate to the task at hand. Continuity of personnel, however, appears to prevent building good relationships between Air Force personnel and congressional staffs.

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<sup>212</sup> Congressional Operations Seminar. The Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University. <http://gai.georgetown.edu/cos.cfm>

<sup>213</sup> Congressional Operations Seminar. <http://gai.georgetown.edu/cos.cfm>

## Chapter 4

### Sister Services

To benchmark the Air Force's relationship with Congress it is beneficial to identify how the other services conceive, build, and grow relationships with Congress. Understanding how each service executes its lawful mandate to establish a department to liaise with Congress might inform Air Force efforts.

#### **GLOBAL FORCE FOR GOOD – United States Navy**

##### Organization

The Department of the Navy's (DON) legislative division is also stipulated in US Code, Title 10, Section 5027 as the Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA).<sup>214</sup> The Navy OLA "is the primary advisor to the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) and Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) on all Congressional items of interest."<sup>215</sup> OLA supports the SECNAV and CNO by forging relationships with members of Congress, their personal staffs and professional committee staffs "ensuring that there is a thorough understanding of, and justification for, naval programs and legislative items to support current and future naval operations."<sup>216</sup> Navy instruction, SECNAVINST 5730.5J, governs the mission, function and the responsibilities of OLA.

OLA consists of the Chief of Legislative Affairs (CLA), a two star admiral, who is supported by his deputy (DCLA) and six divisions, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. The divisions are labeled LA 1-6. LA-1, congressional operations is responsible for congressional travel, budget, information technologies, and supplies. This operations division is a "consolidation of OLA's logistical resources which facilitate the

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<sup>214</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 5027 : US Code - Section 5-27: Chief of Legislative Affairs  
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

<sup>215</sup> Navy Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA), Chapter 1, 15 January 2008, 1.

<sup>216</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 1, 1.

execution of Congressional travel missions and the organizational elements necessary to establish and maintain routine operational services and support to the command.”<sup>217</sup> This section is similar in function to the SAF/LLO. LA-2, congressional information and public affairs, is responsible for public affairs and congressional inquiries and is similar to SAF/LLI (inquiries). Navy OLA receives approximately 5,000 written congressional inquiries annually from congressional members and staffs. The majority of these inquiries are personnel-related; examples include questions of pay, service time, board results, and individual treatment. Active duty, retired, and/or former Navy service members or their families often initiate these inquiries.<sup>218</sup> OLA also receives inquiries directly from congressional members and their staffs regarding Navy contracts, programs, and policies. In addition to OLA, the staff public affairs office (PAO) provides “public affairs support to the CLA and OLA staff by maintaining a close relationship with the Navy’s Chief of Information (CHINFO) staff, the Secretary of the Navy’s PAO, Chief of Naval Operations’ PAO, and other Navy and joint PAOs as necessary” to ensure a coordinated response.<sup>219</sup> The primary purpose is to “coordinate the actions and messages of Navy legislative affairs with Navy public affairs activities.”<sup>220</sup> The Navy’s PAO coordination is more formally structured than that of the Air Force and helps develop a consistent Navy message across the fleet.

LA-3 and LA-4 are the Senate and House offices respectively. Both offices work with their respective members and provide travel escort for members, their personal staffs, and associated committee staffs as required.

LA-5, is naval programs and is similar to SAF/LLW. LA-5 is responsible for “presenting the DON Programs portion of the President’s

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<sup>217</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V A, 43.

<sup>218</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V A, 48.

<sup>219</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V A, 51.

<sup>220</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V A, 51.

budget request to Congress. The consolidated strategy consists of two steps: Planning and Engagement Execution.”<sup>221</sup> Engagement planning typically occurs in the fall when LA-5 identifies and prioritizes issues for the upcoming budget cycle that might require “proactive engagement.”<sup>222</sup> These issues are separated into three planning products to facilitate future engagements. The three categories are: issue engagement plans, principal engagement plans, and ribbon charts. The OLA Action Officer (AO) creates the issue engagement plans. For each potential issue, a spreadsheet is created that identifies the Congressional Member, personal staff, and professional staff members for committees who should be engaged, as well as the DON principals who are responsible for the engagement. Principal engagement plans are designed to effectively utilize the top Navy leaders (including the SECNAV, Chief of Naval Operations, and their deputies) in delivering the Navy message.<sup>223</sup> These plans are simultaneously created by LA-5 and cross-referenced with the issue engagement plans. A ribbon chart is a compilation of the issue and principal engagement plans matched to a timeline. “The ribbon charts also overlay the broader Congressional picture to convey the environment to the principals”; ribbon charts are “OLA’s standard method of briefing principals on Congressional engagements, and are tracked through completion.”<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V E, 63.

<sup>222</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V E, 63.

<sup>223</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V E, 63.

<sup>224</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V E, 63.

## Staging – SECNAV/CNO Legislative Engagement

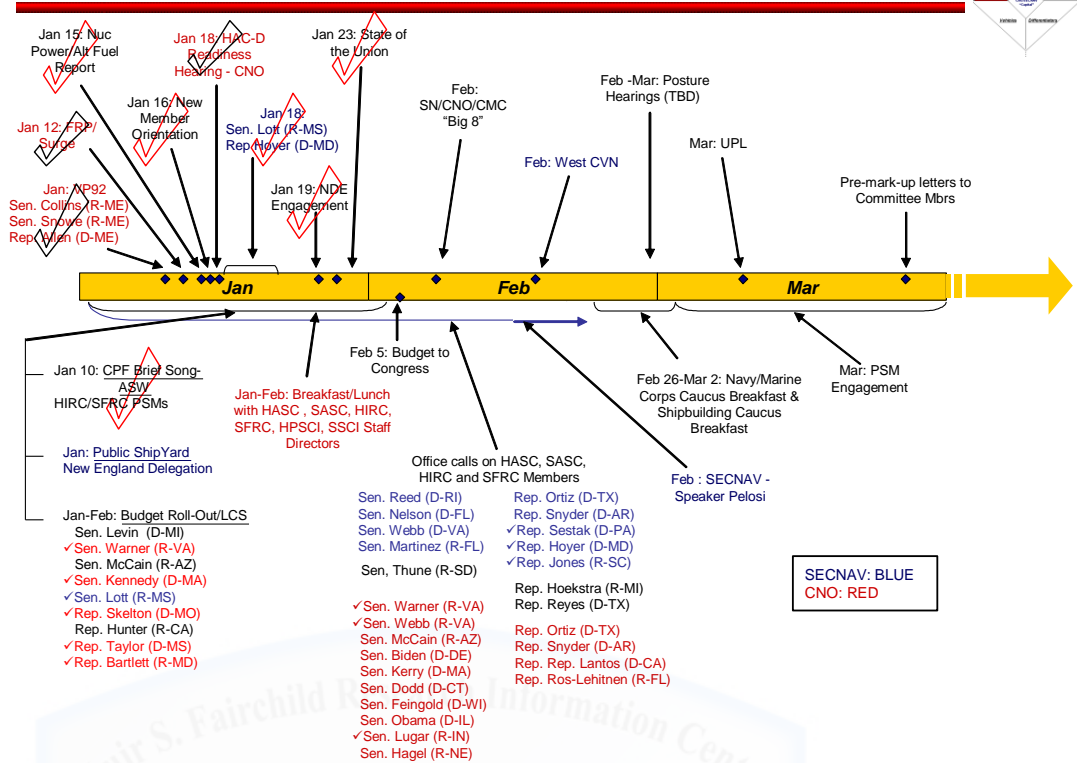


Figure 4: Naval Congressional Engagement Plan  
Source: Navy Office of Legislative Affairs

The final Navy section, LA-6, legislation, works liaison with Congress as subject matter experts on legislative change. This includes “developing, coordinating and processing legislative proposals as well as synchronizing Navy positions on pending legislation and Executive Branch communications with Congress.”<sup>225</sup> Like LA-5, LA-6 serves as the primary liaison for the subject areas that fall within its purview, such as: military construction (MILCON); acquisition and procurement; education and training; environmental; military and international law; military personnel; health and medical care; and legislative reference. LA-6 is similar to SAF/LLP. LA-6 executes similar engagement plans and develops corresponding ribbon charts to support the Navy’s needs to Congress.

<sup>225</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 3, Section V F, 68.



The Navy also has an appropriations matters office (FMBE) responsible for coordinating all matters regarding congressional appropriations. FMBE is “aligned to support the House and Senate subcommittees related to DON appropriations; specifically Appropriation Subcommittees – Defense and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and related Agencies.”<sup>226</sup> A Navy captain, O-6, leads DON FMBE. The distinctive responsibilities between authorizers and appropriators are separated within the Navy similar to the Air Force structure. Navy Legislative Affairs is the SECNAV’s principal staff assistant for executing the legislative functions and responsibilities of the DON with the exception of liaison with the Appropriations Committees. The Appropriations Committees are “vested with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management and Comptroller (ASN (FM&C))).”<sup>227</sup> A close working relationship between DON OLA and ASN (FM&C) is “essential if the DON’s needs and views are to be presented effectively to Congress.”<sup>228</sup>

“Competency, integrity, honesty, and discretion are a few of the key enablers that facilitate the relationships that are invaluable to the success of OLA and the DON” with Congress.”<sup>229</sup>

### Building Relationships

Navy OLA’s organization and execution are similar to the Air Force. This makes sense based on the size of the services and their technologically-focused systems, especially when compared to the Marine Corps and Army. The philosophy of Navy OLA is “to educate the members, be transparent with them as much as possible, tell the Navy story, and be accessible to the Hill’s needs.”<sup>230</sup> Rear Admiral Tom Copeman, Chief of Legislative Affairs, describes the legislative function as

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<sup>226</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 1, 4.

<sup>227</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 1, 6.

<sup>228</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 1, 6.

<sup>229</sup> Navy OLA, Chapter 1, 9.

<sup>230</sup> Rear Admiral Thomas Copeman, USN, Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview by the author, 17 February 2011.

an art form and emphasizes the differences each interaction takes on based on the personalities and politics involved in the situation.

In order to build strong relationships the Navy seeks to hire the top performers and typically interviews half a dozen people for each OLA position to get a sense of an individual's demeanor.<sup>231</sup> Once hired, the Navy seeks to keep its people at least a two-and-a-half years in OLA to maintain consistency with Congress. Another strength of the organization is its use of repeat performers.

The idea of the Legislative Fellows program is to expose officers early in their career to the legislative branch to better understand the system of checks and balances in American government. This experience is invaluable to senior leadership of the military services. The Navy successfully captures this expertise in subsequent OLA tours of duty. "The LA-6 division director has been in the job for seven years with a few breaks to go back to the fleet," but the relationships built between him and members of Congress and their staffs persists.<sup>232</sup> Mr. Tom Crowley is currently a government service (GS) civilian in charge of the Navy's programs division, but had approximately six years experience prior as a Naval officer in the Senate office.<sup>233</sup> Navy OLA sees the transition from active service to GS an important part of continuity and historical context.

## **ARMY STRONG - United States Army**

### Organization

The Army divides its Office of the Chief, Legislative Liaison (OCLL) similar to the Air Force's organization and is mandated by law in US

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<sup>231</sup> Rear Admiral Thomas Copeman, USN, Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 17 February 2011

<sup>232</sup> Rear Admiral Thomas Copeman, USN, Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 17 February 2011

<sup>233</sup> Rear Admiral Thomas Copeman, USN, Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 17 February 2011

Code, Title 10, Section 3023.<sup>234</sup> OCLL has a House and Senate office, as well as a programs division, congressional operations section, investigations and legislative branch, congressional inquiry department, and support operations section. The House and Senate offices are charged to serve as the primary point of contact with members of Congress. They also assist the members and their staffs in understanding Army policies, actions, operations, and requirements.<sup>235</sup> The hill offices are also responsible for notifying members about inpatient and outpatient soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.<sup>236</sup> The programs division is similar to the Air Force's LLW and LLP sections. The programs division is the principal liaison to the HASC and SASC as well as Intelligence Committees. This division works in concert with the Army's SAFM-BUL, similar to the Air Force's SAF/FMBL, to coordinate a clear, consistent message between the Army and Congressional authorizers and appropriators. Programs is responsible for all Army programs, plans and policies, as well as liaison support to the Army as a whole.

The next area for comparison is the Army's congressional operations division (COD), which is similar to SAF/LLZ. COD provides current-operations and strategic-communications support to the OCLL.<sup>237</sup> This office is also responsible for the "formulation of strategic plans and decision support tools for the organization."<sup>238</sup> COD divides its division into four sections. The first is the current operations branch. This branch "produces plans, orders, and instructions to execute CLL's

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<sup>234</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 3023 : US Code - Section 3023: Chief of Legislative Liaison  
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

<sup>235</sup> Department of the Army, "The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison,"  
<http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

<sup>236</sup> Department of the Army, "The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison,"  
<http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

<sup>237</sup> Department of the Army, "The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison,"  
<http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

<sup>238</sup> Department of the Army, "The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison,"  
<http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

intent.”<sup>239</sup> COD also contains a strategic communications (STRATCOM) branch. The STRATCOM branch formulates communications strategies and produces products to facilitate interactions between the Army and Capitol Hill. Most importantly, this branch coordinates with the Army staff to ensure the Army speaks with one voice when communicating with Congress. The third branch in COD is the plans and strategy branch, which develops and execute strategic plans, including Congressional engagement strategies, to prepare senior-leader hearings and visits. The final branch of COD is the Army senior-leader branch, which provides special legislative assistants to SecArmy, the Army Chief of Staff (CSA), USecArmy, the Vice-CSA, as well as the Sergeant Major of the Army.<sup>240</sup>

The Army’s investigations and legislative division “coordinates, monitors, and reports on congressional investigative actions that are of interest to, or involve the Army.”<sup>241</sup> This section represents the Army’s interests during congressional investigations ensuring the investigating committee receives accurate and complete information. The division also acts as the lead for programs and policies relating to the environment, military justice, morale-welfare-and-recreation (MWR) activities, financial management and acquisition-policy matters.<sup>242</sup> It also provides training and advice for witnesses called to appear before Congress, including preparation of written statements and ensuring clearance for statements from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the White House. Finally this division manages the Senate confirmation process for General Officers and senior Army civilians.

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<sup>239</sup> Department of the Army, “The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison,” <http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

<sup>240</sup> Department of the Army, “The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison,” <http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

<sup>241</sup> Department of the Army, “The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison,” <http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

<sup>242</sup> Department of the Army, “The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison,” <http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

The Army's congressional inquiry division executes its functions similar to the Air Force. The office coordinates, prepares, and provides clear and timely replies to Members and Committees of Congress in response to inquiries and Requests for Information (RFI). The Army receives almost 50,000 congressional inquiries a year—almost tenfold that of the Air Force.<sup>243</sup> This division also informs Congress of any operational casualties and contract awards valued over \$6.5 million.<sup>244</sup>

Finally, the Army's Chief, Legislative Liaison has a support operations division, which functions very similarly to SAF/LLO. The support operations division coordinates Congressional travel for Army organizations as well as manages the Army Congressional Fellowship Program.<sup>245</sup>

#### Building Relationships

Building relationships is at the core of every service's LL/LA office, but the Army may have a greater need for it than any other service. More than 1.1 million men and women constitute the US Army today, and all Members of Congress have an Army unit in their constituency whether an Army post or a National Guard Armory.<sup>246</sup> When the Army or another service engages Congress, the most important thing to the Members are their district or their state; and the first thing asked is how something will affect that area of responsibility. One thing that affects this are the people in uniform who serve and vote in the congressional district; so the human capital piece is amplified with the Army over the

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<sup>243</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview by the author, 16 February 2011

<sup>244</sup> Department of the Army, "The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison," <http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

<sup>245</sup> Department of the Army, "The Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison," <http://ocll.hqda.pentagon.mil>

<sup>246</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

other services merely because of scope and size.<sup>247</sup> This vast scope can be seen as an advantage but also comes with challenges.

The vastness of the Army, its programs, its people, and its locations makes it difficult to stay on message. The Army realized this over the past few years and is working on strengthening its relationship with Congress through its LL activities. First, the last two Secretaries of the Army have had legislative experience. Each brought a “level of political expertise and sophistication that the Army benefits from having, and they’ve also brought with them a razor-sharp focus on enhancing this relationship.”<sup>248</sup> In addition to the secretariat having knowledge of the legislative branch, the Army is trying to build an officer cadre that is good at the LL job. In order to do that, the Army “changed the way [it] views the LL business; [by] taking a cue from the other services and making the assignment desirable,” or promotable.<sup>249</sup> Stephen Rosen discusses how control over the promotion is a source of power in the military.<sup>250</sup> “Power is won through influence over who is promoted to positions of senior command.”<sup>251</sup> The Army struggled to better its legislative relations and created a promotable pathway to the senior ranks so young officers could rise to the top. Rosen points out how a new pathway may be required to ensure that “new skills are not relegated to professional oblivion;” a skill identifier benefits both organizational and individual effectiveness.<sup>252</sup>

In addition to hiring a new group of officers, the Army is improving its congressional engagement process with a somewhat unique approach.

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<sup>247</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>248</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>249</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>250</sup> Stephen Peter Rosen. *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 20.

<sup>251</sup> Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military*, 20.

<sup>252</sup> Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military*, 21.

OCLL developed an annual Army engagement plan that includes every 3-star general and key 2-star generals in the National Capitol Region (NCR). OCLL works with each of these generals to develop his/her personal yearlong engagement plan. The plan talks about the general's equities, congressional equities, which congressional members the general should focus on in OCLL's expert opinion, which oversight committees are relevant, personal relationships, key congressional members, key Army installations pertinent to that member, or key issues for the congressman. OCLL then develops an engagement plan linked to the legislative cycle and also targets key members of Congress to engage with the Army message (see Figure 2 and 3).<sup>253</sup> Engagement plans and messaging are designed to build trust and confidence so that when a congressman has an issue it's not an introduction; a relationship exists and the congressman "trusts that when he lays out the issue, he's going to receive a straight answer, even if its no."<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>254</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011







 <div> <div>Example</div> <div>  </div> </div>	
<div>Congressional Engagement Plan</div>	
Congressional Equities	Army Equities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctrine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doctrine and Training</li> <li>• Changes and revisions to FM 3.0 and 7.0 (Ops and Training)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and Readiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leader Development</li> <li>• Increasing Rigor in Initial Entry Training - BOLC, Rifle Marksmanship, Basic Training</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materiel - Modernization Way Ahead, JTRS and the Network, and Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Strategy, M4 Rifles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reset funding 2-3 years after combat ops cease</li> <li>• Equipment Transfer—Executing the disposition process for all types of equipment in conjunction with Army priorities</li> <li>• Ground Combat Vehicle</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personnel Issues - End Strength, Manning the Force (Recruiting, Retention), Health of the Force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustain Quality of Life</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military Construction and Facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective and efficient base operations, Quality of Life, Right-sized garrisons</li> </ul>
<div>FY 11 Legislative Objectives</div>	
<div>1. Fund the Army's FY2011 President's Budget request to put the Army back in balance. [FM&amp;C]</div>	
<div>2. Sustain the All-Volunteer Force. [M&amp;RA/G1]</div>	
<div>3. Provide infrastructure and services to meet strategic demands. [ACSIM/CIO-G6]</div>	
<div>4. Train and equip Soldiers, units, and Civilians to maintain a high level of readiness for the current operations. [G3/G8]</div>	
<div>5. Provide effective and efficient support to Combatant Commanders. [G-4/AL&amp;T/G8/CIO-G6]</div>	
<div>6. Reset Soldiers, Units, and Equipment. [G8/G4/AL&amp;T]</div>	
<div>7. Modernization. [G8/AL&amp;T/G4]</div>	

Figure 5: Army Congressional Engagement Plan  
Source: Army Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison



Example



Key Members and Staff to Engage

REPRESENTATIVES	
Appropriators	Authorizers
Israel (NY) PME	Forbes (VA) Modernization
Frelinghuysen (NJ) BCT Modernization	Coffman (CO) Soldiers Discharge Due to PTSD
Bishop S. (GA) CAC Facilities in Georgia Property Accountability; Inventory Visibility	Ortiz (TX) Readiness CAC Facility in an Antonio

SENATORS	
Appropriators	Authorizers
Cochran (MS) SAC-D Ranking	Bayh (IN) SASC-R Chair
Murkowski, L. (AK) Energy/Natural Resources Ranking	Burr (NC) SASC-R Ranking
Shelby (AL) Aviation BCT Modernization	Lieberman (CT) A/L Forces S/Committee Chair Modernization

Caucuses		
Kilpatrick (MI) Congressional Black Caucus Accessions	Reyes (TX) Congressional Hispanic Caucus Accessions	Inhofe (OK) Senate Army Caucus Paladin PIM
Napolitano (CA) Mental Health Caucus Char PTSD	Jones W. (NC) Depot Caucus Future of Army Depots	Bond (MO) Guard Reserve Caucus National Guard and Reserve Equipping (NGREA)

Personal Relationships		
Hoyer (MD) CODEL Interaction	Kissell (NC) Previous Command at Fort Bragg	Shumer (NY) Home state Senator

HAC-D PSM	HASC Readiness Subcommittee
P. Terry	V. Plunket
T. McLemore	C. Garman
	L. Williams

SAC-D	SASC
E. Maldonado	B. Sutey
	J. Quirk
	A. Barker

Figure 6: Army Key Member Engagement Chart  
Source: Army Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison

Having the right people is important and the Army is trying to build a core cadre of congressional expertise with its Fellows program. In the past three years, the Army has focused on making this program a priority for OCLL. The Army program currently uses a three-and-a-half year tour of duty for 24 military officers and one civilian. The first year is a fully-funded certificate program at George Washington University, followed by a year on Capitol Hill, and then a two-year follow-on back in the Army filling an OCLL position. The Army is currently the only service that supports a fully-funded certificate program (the Air Force used to, but fiscal constraints removed this from the program).<sup>255</sup> The Chief of Staff of the Army has asked OCLL to reduce the post-Hill tour to 18 months in OCLL for a controlled three-year tour. The Army expects to utilize this expertise throughout the organization to provide congressional understanding at all levels of command.

Outreach is a common thing amongst all the service LLs, and *Army Days* are not unique in composition. *Army Day* is similar to *Marine Day*, but the Army hosts two events annually. The first is held at the National Training Center (NTC) in Fort Irwin, California and the other is held at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Fort Polk, Louisiana.<sup>256</sup> These events allow the Army to introduce mission specifics to Congress. The scheduled events are a “hook” to get congressional participation, but the trip allows the Army to discuss important Title 10 issues like privatized housing, schools, warrior-transition units, base realignment and closure, and military construction.<sup>257</sup> Typical scheduled events include a C-130 flight where visitors witness a paratroop drop while airborne, special operations equipment, and Army vehicles. The senior service typically receives support from the Air Force in executing *Army*

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<sup>255</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>256</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>257</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

*Days.* The events provide an opportunity for new staffers to experience the Army mission; but, more importantly, for senior congressional members the Army perspective on current wars is important.

Congressional delegations (CODELs) are an important aspect of every LL organization, and “when Congress travels it’s typically into the theaters of conflict, because money is tight, and the Army is constantly trying to ‘win’ those trips.”<sup>258</sup> For example, every time Senator Carl Levin, Chairman of the SASC, travels the Army Senate Liaison Division Chief escorts him. A lot of business gets done during long hours flying as well as throughout the entire CODEL between members of congress and their military escorts; the Army has an advantage in escorting these CODELs because they’re currently engaged most heavily in operations.<sup>259</sup>

The Army’s current focus on improving the effectiveness of OCLL is in part to struggling over the past few years with effectively communicating its modernization program to Congress. The Air Force is not alone in losing trust with Congress based on poor communication. The Secretary of Defense canceled the Army’s Future Combat Systems program for being an over-budget and misguided program relying on immature technologies.<sup>260</sup> The Army understands the need for a “new modernization program that earns trust and credibility with Congress.”<sup>261</sup> The Army looked at the other services to better organize itself to communicate programs and message in a way to help Congress understand the program’s purpose and necessity for national security. The Army experiences difficulty in messaging because it has so many different things going on in so many congressional districts; this vastness highlights the importance of legislative functions. While the Army only

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<sup>258</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>259</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>260</sup> Shachtman, Noah. “Pentagon Chief Rips Heart Out of Army’s ‘Future’,” *Wired*, 6 April 2009, <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2009/04/gates-rips-heart/>

<sup>261</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview, 16 February 2011

recently began to place a premium on this office, it is doing so with fervor.

### **SEMPER FI – United States Marine Corps**

The US Marine Corps (USMC) was established as a separate military service over 200 years ago and organizationally finds itself as a separate service within the Department of the Navy (DON). Both the Navy and the Marine Corps are represented by the Secretary of the Navy for civilian oversight; however, the USMC has its own military leadership in the Commandant of the USMC. The National Security Act of 1947 not only established the Air Force but also “protected the existence of the Corps and stated its functions.”<sup>262</sup> However the Act did not necessarily provide the means to carry out those missions. Public Law 416, signed by President Truman in June 1952 gave the Marine Corps “a seat at the [Joint Chiefs of Staff] JCS table.”<sup>263</sup> Marines gained full membership in the JCS in 1978.<sup>264</sup> The USMC also has its own legislative liaison division in the Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) in accordance with US Code, Title 10, Section 5047—Legislative Assistant to the Commandant.<sup>265</sup> This position differs slightly from the other services as the legislative functions support the senior military leader vice the civilian secretary. The reason for this difference is because the Secretary of the Navy represents one department, but two services. Legislative functions are required to support the Commandant to provide service expertise when relating to Congress.

The OLA mission is to facilitate “a shared understanding between the USMC and Congress in order to ensure support for the Commandant’s legislative priorities and requirements, and to maintain the Corps’ unique role within the Joint Force as the Nation’s premier

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<sup>262</sup> Victor H. Krulac, LTG, USMC (ret). *First to Fight: An inside view of the US Marine Corps* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 58.

<sup>263</sup> Krulac, *First to Fight*, 58 and 65.

<sup>264</sup> Krulac, *First to Fight*, 58 and 65.

<sup>265</sup> 10 U.S.C. § 5047 : US Code - Section 5047: Legislative Assistant to the Commandant <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/>

force in readiness.”<sup>266</sup> The Marine Corps’ Chief of Legislative Affairs supports the Commandant, but is also the deputy director to the Secretary of the Navy’s Office of Legislative Affairs, with the naval Chief of the Office of Legislative Affairs being the director.

### Organization

The USMC OLA is organized similarly to the other services, but a few details of their organization may prove useful for a comparison. The USMC OLA office is broken into five divisions. The first is the ‘congressional case procedures for staff’ section responsible for answering over 4,000 constituent inquiries annually from members of congress. This section “is designed to explain some of the Marine Corps policies and help Congressional Staff expedite the resolution” of the constituent’s case.”<sup>267</sup> This section is similar to SAF/LLI (inquiries).

The ‘congressional correspondence section is designed to “provide marines, former Marines, family of members of Marines and former Marines, and caseworkers guidance on where to obtain specific information related to service in the U.S. Marine Corps.”<sup>268</sup> Caseworkers are the men and women working in the personal offices of Congressmen.

The two main pillars within OLA are the House and Senate offices. These offices execute functions similar to the Air Force’s House and Senate offices (LLH and LLS), but are much smaller. The House and Senate offices consists of only three officers each, but includes two enlisted Marines. The primary focus for interacting with Congress is placed on the House and Senate offices (as opposed to different branches within SAF/LL, which separate aspects of Congress like committee and personal staffs). Congressional inquiries are typically made through

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<sup>266</sup> United States Marine Corps, “Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) Home,” <http://www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/cmclegalasst/Pages/home.aspx>

<sup>267</sup> USMC, OLA, <http://www.usmc.mil/unit/hqmc/cmclegalasst/Pages/CongressionalCaseProcedures.aspx>

<sup>268</sup> USMC, OLA, <http://www.usmc.mil/unit/hqmc/cmclegalasst/Pages/CongressionalCorrespondanceSection.aspx>

these offices, and the Marines assigned to them serve as the points of contact.<sup>269</sup> The Marine Corps also has a Legislative Fellows program and incorporates these Marines as part of the legislative affairs function. A unique aspect of their Fellows program is the inclusion of enlisted members. 2009 saw the first enlisted senior non-commissioned officer (SNCO) selected for the Congressional Fellowship; the SNCO aspect extends the reach, message, and influence of the Commandant as well as provides a different perspective from that of the officer corps by presenting an “enhanced...understanding and familiarization of Marine Corps warfighting capabilities, mission, and vision.”<sup>270</sup>

The fifth section executes the Navy OLA liaison. This office includes one officer who handles Marine Corps programs, like the STOVL (Short Take Off and Vertical Landing) version of the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF).<sup>271</sup> This officer is responsible for providing information on Research Development Test & Evaluation, procurement for the Marine Corps (PMC), aviation procurement-Navy (APN) (since the Navy is responsible for funding Marine Corps aviation assets), and science and technology.

The organization of the USMC OLA is similar to other services, but a fundamental difference is their approach taken with interacting with Congress.<sup>272</sup> The Marine Corps has always prided itself as “the Few, the Proud...” and the “first to fight”<sup>273</sup> and recognizes its small size as its uniqueness. So Congress tends to see the Corps as “one message with few voices,” as opposed to the Air Force, which has considerably more

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<sup>269</sup> USMC, OLA

<http://www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/cmclegalasst/Documents/Caseworker%20Handbook.pdf>

<sup>270</sup> USMC SNCO Fellowship brief, slide 12

[www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/.../SNCO%20Fellowship%20Brief.ppt](http://www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/.../SNCO%20Fellowship%20Brief.ppt)

<sup>271</sup> Interview with a USMC OLA Officer familiar with these issues, 3 May 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>272</sup> Interview with a USMC OLA, 3 May 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>273</sup> Krulac, *First to Fight*, 176.



voices trying to convey its message.<sup>274</sup> When congressional members need something from the Marine Corps, they know *who* to go to—and not what office to go to. For example, a staffer on the HASC knows to call Colonel Bradley Hall when a question needs to be asked; in the Air Force the HASC would call the fighter rep, the tanker rep, the space rep, the intel rep, the deputy LLW director, or the LLW director depending on the question. The simplicity of the Marine organization provides greater consistency in message. Understanding the relative size of the Marine Corps affords some of this simplicity, but it is still a difference among the legislative organizations within DOD worth highlighting.

#### Building Relationships

The Marine Corps also has a *Marine Day* or outreach program to educate Capitol Hill on its mission. Once a year the Marines host *Marine Day* at Marine Corps Base Quantico. This event is highly publicized on Capitol Hill and is open to many people throughout the legislative and executive branches. The Marines host approximately 350-400 people for the day. The wait list for *Marine Day* typically averages 50 people. The day usually begins with helicopter flights from Andrews Air Force Base to Quantico where guests then view a combined arms live-fire demonstration. The attendees next split into three groups to experience Marine vignettes; during the events attendees have the opportunity to shoot small arms, view static displays like Howitzers and helicopters, and drive Marine vehicles like the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) All Terrain Vehicle (M-ATV) and amtrac, an amphibious tractor.<sup>275</sup>

Although the Marine Corps is smaller than the other services and does not have its own civilian Secretary it effectively interacts with Congress. It is often cited as the example of a military service effectively building personal relationships with the Hill. Brigadier General Rudder,

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<sup>274</sup> Interview with a USMC OLA, 3 May 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>275</sup> Interview with a USMC OLA, 3 May 2011. (unattributed interview).



Legislative Assistant to the Commandant, believes the strong relationship exists for two reasons. First, Congress has a connection to the Marine Corps because “they [Congress] see themselves as the ones who put the Marine Corps into law,” and secondly, because the Corps is “small and better able to rally its message around a single point of contact—the Commandant.”<sup>276</sup> The Marines try to have a “regular drum beat” of senior officers representing the Commandant on the Hill discussing pertinent USMC issues, as does the Air Force. But some of their methods of communicating are more efficient. The Marine Corps provides their representatives on the Hill “with all the information the Commandant has” so they can maximize every opportunity with a congressional member or staffer—whether that be a five-minute wait for the shuttle bus or a gap between meetings—and to enable all to “speak intelligently about the Marine Corps as a whole.”<sup>277</sup> The Marine Corps hosts’ subject matter briefs with staffers to engage them in the current mission and experiences, as well as escorts every incoming class of Representatives and Senators for each Congress.

Throughout the two hundred plus years of American sovereignty, the US Marine Corps has benefited from the direct action of Congress to “preserve and strengthen” the Marines’ fighting effectiveness and enabled the Corps to build a strong cultural identity which also benefits effectiveness on Capitol Hill.<sup>278</sup> Many people know the Marine Corps mantra: Once a Marine, Always a Marine, and this idea pervades the US national psyche. The *Friends of the Corps* not only consists of congressional men and women whose area of responsibility includes Marine Corps bases, but also consists of those who served in the Marine Corps and those whose parents or children served. Brigadier General

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<sup>276</sup> Brigadier General Steven Rudder, USMC, Legislative Assistant to the Commandant, interview by the author, 17 February 2011

<sup>277</sup> Brigadier General Steven Rudder, USMC, Legislative Assistant to the Commandant, interview, 17 February 2011

<sup>278</sup> Krulac, *First to Fight*, 66.

Rudder touts the “great identity of the USMC” as a strength in its relationship with Congress.

### **Summary**

Though similar statutes require legislative functions within the services and similar organization construction is apparent, the LL/LA offices each have some unique distinctions that enhance their effectiveness with Congress. The next chapter describes how the Air Force is trying to transform its relationship with Congress, and also provide ways to enhance the service’s effectiveness by incorporating some strengths from the other services LL/LA organizations.



## Chapter 5

### Mending Fences

Robert Jervis discusses the effect perceptions can have on the world in his book *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. He illuminates the notion that “bureaucrats’ policy preferences are determined by their positions in the government: ‘Where you stand is determined by where you sit.’”<sup>279</sup> People learn from history and decision makers often form images from life experiences.<sup>280</sup> This idea could be behind the current tension between the Air Force and Congress. The past decade of difficulty with the legislative branch potentially produced a misperception of the Air Force’s identity. For a service that touts “Integrity First” the persona of ‘deviousness’ appears out of character.

Research of the organizational structure of each service’s legislative office reveals similar constructs, but also indicates areas of possible improvement for the Air Force.

#### **Attitude**

Attitude is a choice. Many people subscribe to the idea that attitudes are “automatic responses to circumstances [and] that...attitude is simply a reflection of what’s going on around us.”<sup>281</sup> However David Cottrell disavows that theory, and believes humans control their attitude and forward movement. “The Air Force officials that come to the Hill, come with their head hung low. They don’t feel good about coming here; they feel like every time they come over they’re going to get beat up about something.”<sup>282</sup> A senior congressional staffer believes AF senior leaders

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<sup>279</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperceptions in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 24.

<sup>280</sup> Jervis, *Perception and Misperceptions in International Politics*, 217.

<sup>281</sup> David Cottrell, *Monday Morning Choices* (New York: CornerStone Leadership Institute, 2007), 97.

<sup>282</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

can't message successfully out of fear of repercussions from higher levels of DOD. These AF leaders go to Capitol Hill and are "unable to talk about substance, because they can't convey their personal beliefs for fear of being fired; or they spin a message they don't stand behind which is easily seen as insincere. So when they have the ear of members of Congress for 30 minutes they don't talk substance because they can't. That is tragic."<sup>283</sup>

When the Air Force does interact with Congress on substantial issues, it has in the past, tended to engage with an adversarial perspective, according to another senior congressional staffer.<sup>284</sup> The Air Force must remember that interacting with Congress does not necessarily have to be "a zero-sum game;" the premium should not be placed on "winning, but on coming up with a sustainable solution in the fullest context—the context of all available resources, other capabilities available throughout the relevant capability portfolio and what makes sense from a Joint perspective."<sup>285</sup> "At the end of the day, the ultimate values and interests of the Air Force must be greater than the service's own immediate needs or preferences. The Air Force's needs must be most proximate to the country vice the service."<sup>286</sup> If the Air Force focuses on it's ability to support and defend the nation and places a premium on openness and transparency, the relationship with Congress can only improve and become productive.<sup>287</sup> Both of these attitudes—fear or offensiveness—impede relationships, the effectiveness of SAF/LL, and any efforts SAF/LL is attempting to make in repairing the

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<sup>283</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>284</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 17 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>285</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 17 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>286</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 17 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>287</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 17 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

relationship with Congress. An example of this adversarial attitude occurred with the 2009 interactions on the Combat Air Forces Reduction in Fighter Forces (CAF Redux). Here we find devils in the dialogue.

### **CAF Redux**

In 2009, Congress directed a report detailing the Air Force's rationale for retiring approximately 250 fighter aircraft in light of a projected shortfall. The Air Force stated: "it could reduce its total fighter and attack aircraft inventory by about 250 aircraft and still effectively perform its missions with slightly increased risk. Effective management of the [Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)] program coupled with investments in modernizing and upgrading legacy F-16 aircraft would mitigate the projected shortfall; [and] the Air Force would still be able to perform its homeland defense mission despite this shortfall."<sup>288</sup> Congressman Ike Skelton, Chairman of the HASC in 2010, directed the Government Accounting Office (GAO) to "evaluate the sufficiency, adequacy, and conclusions" of the Air Force report.<sup>289</sup> The GAO concluded the Air Force's report "reflected previously established service plans and strategic level guidance that was dated by the time the report [was] issued."<sup>290</sup> The Air Force's CAF Redux report presented limited new analysis and summarized the Air Force's desire to transition to an all-stealth, 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighter force while avoiding large investments in legacy, non-stealth.<sup>291</sup> Congress took issue with the Air Force's conclusions based on the dependent assumptions "about JSF program performance and the feasibility of extending the life of legacy F-16s,"

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<sup>288</sup> United States General Accounting Office (GAO), "Tactical Aircraft: Air Force Fighter Reports Generally Addressed Congressional Mandates, but Reflected Dated Plans and Guidance, and Limited Analyses." 24 February 2011.

<http://timeswampland.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/gao-af.pdf>

<sup>289</sup> GAO, "Tactical Aircraft." 24 February 2011

<http://timeswampland.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/gao-af.pdf>

<sup>290</sup> GAO, "Tactical Aircraft." 24 February 2011

<http://timeswampland.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/gao-af.pdf>

<sup>291</sup> GAO, "Tactical Aircraft." 24 February 2011

<http://timeswampland.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/gao-af.pdf>

because the key data was either in flux or unavailable when the report was prepared.<sup>292</sup> Yet the Air Force requested retiring fighter aircraft without informing Congress of the assumptions or lack of detailed data.

In March 2010 Congressman Roscoe Bartlett, Ranking Member of the House Air and Land Subcommittee, stated on the record he believed the Air Force's decision to retire 250 fighters in FY10 was made before the Secretary of Defense announced his decision to terminate F-22 production, and before any members of Congress learned of the multi-year delay in the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program.<sup>293</sup> Mr. Bartlett contended the assumptions in the restructuring plan were not today's reality, yet the Air Force continued with the plan despite the increase in risk to national security and without the proactive forethought to disclose this information to Congress.<sup>294</sup> However, at the end of the day, as painful as CAF Redux was, it was an Air Force success.<sup>295</sup> The service was able to retire the desired fighter aircraft, put the manpower and money into other requirements, and maintain enough fighting force to protect national security. It was definitely not perfect, and the Air Force could have done better by communicating earlier and more effectively with the Capitol Hill. A way to mitigate some of this tension, in future situations, is to engage in "informal, off-the-record conversations," according to the Under Secretary of the Air Force.<sup>296</sup>

Capitol Hill staffers can provide insight if the Air Force is struggling with an issue by providing a sense of what will be accepted or rejected by

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<sup>292</sup> GAO, "Tactical Aircraft." 24 February 2011

<http://timeswampland.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/gao-af.pdf>  
<http://timeswampland.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/gao-af.pdf>, p.3.

<sup>293</sup> House Armed Services Committee (HASC), *Department of the Navy and Air Force Combat Aviation Programs*, 111th Cong., 2nd sess., 2010.

[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_house\\_hearings&docid=f:57033.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_house_hearings&docid=f:57033.pdf)

<sup>294</sup> HASC, *Combat Aviation Programs*, 2010. [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_house\\_hearings&docid=f:57033.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_house_hearings&docid=f:57033.pdf)

<sup>295</sup> Thomas Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011.

<sup>296</sup> Erin Conaton, Under Secretary of the Air Force, interview by the author, 16 February 2011.

members of Congress.<sup>297</sup> CAF redux, in hindsight, might have been a case where the Air Force sought informal feedback regarding its plan, and illuminated potential contention prior to a formal announcement. During her first year as Under Secretary, Ms. Erin Conaton was often asked for her opinion on how the Hill would react to certain news; she was more than glad to impart her experience to benefit the Air Force or DOD, but highlighted that the longer she is in the Air Force, the further she is displaced from understanding current congressional thought or dynamics. “That kind of perspective could be brought by an informal conversation with a staff director or senior committee staffer...but the institutional default is to have conversations inside the department, then inside the executive branch in a very serial kind of manner.”<sup>298</sup> She pointed out this issue is not unique to the Air Force, but she emphasized that the Marine Corps is “better at finding informal ways to get that feedback and to maintain that type of dialogue.” If the Air Force chooses to engage in this type of proactive, informal relationship with Congress, the results may prove beneficial for both branches of government.

### **Consistency of Message**

Another area for improvement is reflected in the Air Force’s consistency of message. The Air Force is a large bureaucratic organization with many programs and vast amounts of data that can be interpreted in various ways. In addition to the large bureaucracy, the Air Force moves its people every two to three years. These characteristics make it difficult to maintain a consistent message. Five years from now there will be almost no one in the Pentagon in the roles they perform today with institutional memory of how or why the Air Force made certain decisions or what specifics were briefed to Congress. By contrast, the staff members in Congress tend to have “long tenure...five, ten, or even twenty years. They have every brief that’s ever been given on a

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<sup>297</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>298</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011



program like JSF” and specific requirements when the program was initiated, when it was reprogrammed, and when it slipped 30 months.<sup>299</sup> It is not that the Air Force can’t change its message about program requirements or strategic needs but how it communicates those changes. Congress seeks to understand the strategic rationale behind the change. “They want an explanation that takes them from yesterday’s answer to today’s answer, and [the Air Force] doesn’t often do that terribly well.”<sup>300</sup> A recent example of changing numbers and the ripples caused is apparent in the discussion of total aircraft inventory (TAI) as compared to primary aircraft inventory (PAI).

### **TAI v PAI**

Total aircraft inventory (TAI) is defined as the “aircraft assigned to operating forces for mission, training, test, or maintenance functions.”<sup>301</sup> TAI encompasses the primary aircraft inventory (PAI), the attrition reserve (AR), and the backup aircraft inventory (BAI). The primary aircraft inventory (PAI) references the aircraft assigned to meet the primary aerospace vehicle authorization (PAA) or unit’s mission, including combat, combat support, training, test, development, and evaluation missions.<sup>302</sup> Attrition Reserve (AR) includes the aircraft “required to replace anticipated losses of primary assigned aircraft” due to accidents or wartime attrition.<sup>303</sup> Another factor accounted in TAI is back-up aircraft inventory, or BAI, which are aircraft allotted to a unit to “allow for scheduled and unscheduled depot level maintenance, modifications, inspections and repairs, and certain other mitigating

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<sup>299</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>300</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>301</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction, CJCSI 4410.01B. “Standardized Terminology for Aircraft Inventory Management.” 31 October 2001. [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/cjcsd/cjcsi/4410\\_01b.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/cjcsd/cjcsi/4410_01b.pdf)

<sup>302</sup> Air Force Instruction (AFI) 16-402, *Aerospace Vehicle Programming, Assignment, Distribution, Accounting and Termination*, 1 December 2009, 3. <http://www.e-publishing.af.mil/shared/media/epubs/AFI16-402.pdf>

<sup>303</sup> AFI 16-402, 3-4.

circumstances without reduction of aircraft available for the assigned mission.”<sup>304</sup>

Prior to 2010, the Air Force reported necessary numbers to Congress in terms of TAI, because “Congress wants to know how many aircraft are sitting at Base X (TAI) as well as how the Air Force is fighting with them and how the aircraft are funded.”<sup>305</sup> However, the Air Force thinks in terms of PAI since that forms the basis for allocating operating resources, including manpower, support equipment, and flying-hour funds.<sup>306</sup> Differences in language sometimes create confusion. In 2010, the Air Force tried to better define its aircraft inventory by reporting needs to Congress in terms of PMAI. The Air Staff A5 decided the real measure, with support from A9 (studies and analysis), was to articulate needs in terms of PMAI for its war-fighting analysis, and to transition from TAI to PMAI.<sup>307</sup> This change led to lengthy conversations between SAF/LL, the Air Staff, and Congress. To Congress, it appeared as if the Air Force changed the definition - (TAI to PMAI) to make the Air Force shortage in fighter aircraft less noticeable.

After a thorough examination of the “current and future strategic environment, and using high fidelity campaign modeling, the Air Force revised its fighter requirement to approximately 1,200” PMAI and approximately 2,000 TAI for the fiscal year 2011 budget request.<sup>308</sup> This was a reduction of approximately 200 aircraft from previous reports. A change in risk accompanied this decrease in fighter force structure from “low to moderate risk” to a “moderate” risk, but allowed the Air Force to redistribute money to higher priority missions.<sup>309</sup> To the Air Force the transition from TAI to PMAI was a way to clarify numbers, definitions,

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<sup>304</sup> AFI 16-402, 3.

<sup>305</sup> Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011

<sup>306</sup> AFI 16-402, 3.

<sup>307</sup> Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011

<sup>308</sup> Unclassified Executive Summary from Fighter Force Structure Shortfalls Report. E-Mail, 04 May 2010.

<sup>309</sup> Unclassified Executive Summary from Fighter Force Structure Shortfalls Report. E-Mail, 04 May 2010.

and differences in language. In retrospect, the change required a more clearly articulated rationale as to why the Air Force was changing the reported terms, TAI to PMAI, and walking Congress through the terms, definitions, and differences of using PMAI. This did not occur to Congress' satisfaction.

### **Internal Strategic Communications**

Consistency of message also occurs within the many layers of the Air Force. The Chief and Secretary have discussions with members of Congress where strategic messages transpire that might not disseminate to the lower levels of the Pentagon or Air Force. For example, the majors and lieutenant colonels that brief at staffer days provide subject-matter-expert briefs to walk PSMs through the details of the programs relevant to the President's budget request. But these officers don't have the benefit of sitting in the room with the Secretary and Chief when perhaps strategic messages are conveyed on a program. This can create opportunities for inconsistency; and to Congress it appears as if the Air Force doesn't have its act together or is not playing straight.<sup>310</sup> This problem is not unique to the Air Force, but is something it struggles with today.

"You want to make sure the message being conveyed [in a response to Congress] is blessed at the top" and the coordination for Chief of Staff approval causes the Air Force to measure response times in weeks and months as opposed to hours as Congress would prefer; the length of time for responses "hurts our relationships on the Hill."<sup>311</sup> A large, bureaucratic, hierarchical organization like the Air Force attempts to provide an answer after rigorous and analytical coordination, but to Congress it looks like "obstructionism, lack of partnership, and disrespect."<sup>312</sup> This dilemma is systemic to DOD, but the Air Force can

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<sup>310</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>311</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>312</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

reduce the impact by flattening the hierarchical approval process. The Marine Corps takes a slightly different approach than the Air Force in this matter. In the USMC, any speech given by the Commandant is sent to the professional staff members (PSMs), and if the speech is of particular importance, the PSMs receive an advance copy.<sup>313</sup> Air Force officers within SAF/LL assumed PSMs and military legislative assistants (MLAs) would not appreciate the barrage of USMC speeches, but on the contrary, most people on Capitol Hill appreciate this information and do not view it as *spam*.<sup>314</sup> Also any remark made by the Commandant in those speeches is considered USMC policy. So if an officer assigned to USMC/OLA receives a question from Capitol Hill that can be answered from the Commandant's speech, the action officer can construct a response and expediently send it back to the Hill.<sup>315</sup> The Air Force requires more coordination on responses to ensure it is "blessed at the top," and this requirement significantly impacts responsiveness.<sup>316</sup>

### **Proactive**

Researching the directors of legislative liaison/affairs for the services reveals one common theme: the need to be proactive. An unclassified website is a simple way to begin a proactive demeanor. The Air Force is the only service that lacks a Legislative Liaison website. The Army's site is the most educational and informative, but the Marine Corp's caseworker handbook available via their website is also uniquely informative. Besides a lack of cyber outreach, in many instances the Air Force appears reactionary. An example was described by a congressional staffer - imagine a member of Congress is informed of an accident at a maintenance depot facility that involved a contractor falling on the job

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<sup>313</sup> Brigadier General Steven Rudder, USMC, Legislative Assistant to the Commandant, interview by the author, 17 February 2011

<sup>314</sup> Interview with senior congressional staffers familiar with these issues, 17-18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>315</sup> Brigadier General Steven Rudder, USMC, Legislative Assistant to the Commandant, interview, 17 February 2011

<sup>316</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

and getting injured. The congressman immediately seeks information from his personal or committee staff. The MLA or PSM contacts the Air Force for more information, but SAF/LL has no idea the accident even occurred. It's difficult to be proactive and bring information to the Hill when the Pentagon isn't even aware of the event. Other services are better about calling the Hill when they have an issue; the action officer calls the MLA or PSM and highlights a potential issue without providing an official statement. A senior congressional staffer provided the following example: say a reporter is asking questions regarding a service issue and informs the officer of a press article being released; it's great when that LL office calls the MLA or PSM and informs them ahead of time. The PSM then has the ability to inform the member and ensure the service and Congress can be prepared to effectively work together in response to the press article. "We [the Air Force in this example] had an accident at a maintenance depot; there were some folks hurt; we don't know the details but we want to let you [PSM on Capitol Hill] know."<sup>317</sup> If this type of interaction occurred, "trust and confidence would be built and show the Air Force is being proactive."<sup>318</sup> However, when this doesn't happen, the situation becomes adversarial and makes it appear as if the two organizations are not working together.

There are ways to improve in this area and help the Air Force work proactively with Congress. "The AF could do better; the Air Force needs to do an outreach down to the unit level."<sup>319</sup> Headquarters Air Force may not agree that bypassing levels of command is best, but SAF/LL has initiated monthly video teleconferences (VTCs) with all subordinate LL branches within the Air Staff and at the MAJCOMs as a way to ensure information is shared and a consistent message is developed. It also

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<sup>317</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>318</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>319</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

helps subordinate levels know what position SAF/LL is taking on certain issues and builds an engagement plan to incorporate all levels in the Air Force plan. These VTCs are a way to flatten the vertical hierarchy of the Air Force. If an accident occurred at a base, the wing could complete the appropriate paperwork and forward it to the Numbered Air Force (NAF). However, there isn't a reason why SAF/LL couldn't be courtesy-copied on the initial notification to ensure proactive notification to Congress. SAF/LL would not contact the wing or involve itself in the accident, but would be able to notify Congress earlier. Many might think this would just cause confusion by not providing Congress all of the information or substantiated facts. However, this is not the case. Nobody knows when something will become a congressional issue, so informing the PSMs early allows them to be in the loop and can improve congressional interaction.<sup>320</sup>

## **Building Relationships**

### Duration

Part of understanding what will be important to Congress is dependent on knowing the organization, the process, and the people. An established relationship allows an inside knowledge of Congress. Problems facing DOD and the Air Force in this vane are 1) choosing the right people for legislative liaison, and 2) balancing the responsibilities to the legislative office and the individual's career. There is a tension between hiring fast-track officers for SAF/LL, their career progression, and the need for officers to serve in LL positions for longer than 12-18 months. According to the Under Secretary of the Air Force and Major General Lori Robinson, Director SAF/LL, there is no perfect answer for this issue.<sup>321</sup> Officers who exhibit potential to serve as future senior leaders in the Air Force benefit from early exposure to the institution of

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<sup>320</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>321</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview 16 February 2011 and Major General Lori Robinson, USAF, Director, Legislative Liaison, interview by the author, 19 February 2011



Congress, but rotating people every year doesn't give "the Air Force the ability to foster the long-term relationships that are the hallmark of effective operation on the Hill."<sup>322</sup> It is up to the director of SAF/LL and the subordinate division directors to build a gameplan for officers balancing individual careers with continuity in SAF/LL. The quick changeover of action officers is a focal point for LL, and something the leadership is actively working on to improve. LL does not need the "best and brightest" officers; it needs the right personality when presenting the Air Force message to Congress.<sup>323</sup> In 2009, almost every position in SAF/LLS and SAF/LLW rotated at the same time; not only did this change the face of SAF/LL on the Hill, it required tremendous effort to ensure continuity.<sup>324</sup> The Air Force is trying to utilize previous experienced personnel, but has not necessarily exploited this opportunity very well in the past. Current director, Major General Lori Robinson and her deputy, Brigadier General Darryl Robertson are two great examples of exploiting previous experience as both served in SAF/LL as younger officers. SAF/LL recently hired Mr. Thomas Lawhead as a GS to head the LLZ branch; with his previous experience as the LLW division director he's invaluable to the continuity of the organization and messaging of the Air Force on Capitol Hill. LL manning requires a meticulous plan to ensure officers do not rotate too quickly or all at once.

### **Air Force Story**

With more continuity in SAF/LL, the Air Force can focus on telling its story to congressional personnel, allowing them to understand all the facets of the complex Air Force mission. The Air Force "operates in all the commons, in all the domains, so that makes our message on multiple levels, multiple fronts, and it can be difficult to articulate it in a single

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<sup>322</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

<sup>323</sup> Major General Robinson, Director, Legislative Liaison, interview, 19 February 2011

<sup>324</sup> Colonel Bradley Spacy, USAF, SAF/LLS Director, interview by the author, 29 April 2011



venue.”<sup>325</sup> Finding ways to communicate what the Air Force does daily is not as difficult as it may appear. The House office conducts a bi-monthly subject-matter-expert (SME) briefs to educate members of Congress and their staffs on Air Force specifics, and hosts informal monthly socials that are informative.<sup>326</sup> These briefs are similar to the Marine Corps “pizza briefs” where recently-deployed USMC regimental commanders brief MLAs on their deployed experience.<sup>327</sup> LLH developed a SME schedule to compliment CSAF’s priorities and invites senior officers to speak. At the monthly socials, LLH invites lower-ranking SMEs for more informal discussions on combat experiences. In 2011, the House LL office demonstrated a remotely-operated video-enhanced receiver (ROVER) terminal to MLAs to build on a previous general officer’s briefing focused on Joint Terminal Attack Controller experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>328</sup> These briefs and socials are invaluable to both the Air Force and Congress. But they are not the only venue to showcase the Air Force in action.

Another option to showcase the men and women of the Air Force and the jobs they perform 365 days a year is through visits to Air Force bases for staffs and congressional members (STAFFDEL and CODELs). These are similar to the Air Power Demo described in chapter three, but on a much smaller scale and in relative close proximity to Washington, DC. The other services have similar *service days*. Small trips to bases enable close interaction between congressional staffs and the airmen who execute the mission. Recently, Senator Snowe’s MLA attended a STAFFDEL to Scott Air Force Base and found the trip to be productive, worthwhile, and informative for staff members trying to learn the Air Force. STAFFDELs provide purpose and access to Airmen for the

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<sup>325</sup> Major General Robinson, Director, Legislative Liaison, interview, 19 February 2011

<sup>326</sup> Colonel Todd Harmer, USAF, SAF/LLH Director, interview by the author, 25 March 2011

<sup>327</sup> Brigadier General Steven Rudder, USMC, Legislative Assistant to the Commandant, interview, 17 February 2011

<sup>328</sup> Colonel Harmer, USAF, SAF/LLH Director, interview, 25 March 2011

youngest to most senior congressional staff member. The last couple of months the Air Force has made a concerted effort to coordinate STAFFDELS that focus on areas of interest of congressional members, and is trying to present things that are pertinent to the Air Force's support of national security.<sup>329</sup> The Air Force should avoid STAFFDELS that are just "dog and pony shows" and focus on viewing scheduled exercises where senior staffers can discuss lessons learned or after action reports with tacticians. Younger staffers require a little more creative approach to introduce them to Air Force specifics.<sup>330</sup>

STAFFDELS and CODELS are invaluable opportunities to build relationships, but other opportunities exist. The Air Force hosts many events for Congressmen to interact with service senior leaders. One group the Air Force interacts with is the Air Force caucus. This caucus began in 1998 when Representative Cliff Stearns asked the Air Force "what he could do to help them keep the service strong as it looked to develop new capabilities for the decades ahead. Their answer: Band together with like-minded legislators to support Air Force positions and needs on Capitol Hill."<sup>331</sup> The caucus has grown from its original 19 members to almost 70 today; members from both parties and from regions throughout the country are represented; some even have prior Air Force service.<sup>332</sup> The percentage of national lawmakers with military experience is decreasing; so the value of a "service-specific caucus" provides a necessary voice.<sup>333</sup> The Air Force recognizes the importance of this caucus and tries to support the members' needs bi-annually in both the House and Senate. The Air Force hosts breakfasts to ensure interaction between the Air Force's senior leaders in the national capitol

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<sup>329</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 18 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>330</sup> Interview with a senior congressional staffer familiar with these issues, 17 February 2011. (unattributed interview).

<sup>331</sup> Air Force Association, "Air Force Caucus," <http://www.afa.org/grl/caucus.asp>

<sup>332</sup> Air Force Association, "Air Force Caucus," <http://www.afa.org/grl/caucus.asp>

<sup>333</sup> Air Force Association, "Air Force Caucus," <http://www.afa.org/grl/caucus.asp>

region and the caucus members. However, there is always an agenda for these events. Brigadier General Rudder, USMC/OLA, believes part of the great relationship between the USMC and Congress is the understanding that “money is made when no money is talked about.”<sup>334</sup> Time in Washington, DC is scheduled to the minute; understanding that strong relationships are built on shared values, common bonds, mutual respect, and support illuminate the need for the Air Force to take opportunities to simply get to know congressional members, versus always having an agenda to accomplish.

**Strengths:**

The Air Force does not need this paper to highlight the tensions between itself and Congress and has begun internal changes to increase the effectiveness of SAF/LL. In the wake of the 2008 firing of the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff, the organization needed to ensure that the leadership set the example for how to build an open, transparent relationship with Congress. Secretary Donley and General Schwartz continually stress these traits as necessary for Air Force members. Congressional members witness and applaud this focus. Congressman Smith, Chairman of the HASC Air and Land Forces Subcommittee in 2010, lauded Lieutenant General Breedlove, at the time the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Requirements, for his thorough and forthright answers.<sup>335</sup>

Another strength in leadership is seen in the confirmation of Ms. Erin Conaton as the Under Secretary of the Air Force. Ms. Conaton’s rich experience in the legislative branch and her unique understanding of Congress can only bolster the Air Force’s relationship. Ms. Conaton served as a Professional Staff Member on the HASC for almost a decade prior to her appointment as the USECAF. Her positions on the HASC

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<sup>334</sup> Brigadier General Steven Rudder, USMC, Legislative Assistant to the Commandant, interview, 17 February 2011

<sup>335</sup> HASC, *Combat Aviation Programs*, 2010. [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_house\\_hearings&docid=f:57033.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_house_hearings&docid=f:57033.pdf)

included professional staff member, minority staff director, and staff director.<sup>336</sup> She is one of the only senior civilian leaders in the Air Force with this type of direct legislative experience. Both the Army and Navy invite this exchange of experience in their senior leaders. Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, was previously a governor for the state of Mississippi;<sup>337</sup> and Secretary of the Army, John McHugh, previously served as the Ranking Member on the House Armed Services Committee.<sup>338</sup> Of the Air Force's 46 Secretaries and Under Secretaries, only two Secretaries, Michael Donley and Russell Rourke, had legislative experience prior to becoming the Secretary of the Air Force.<sup>339</sup> Mr. Donley served as a PSM on the SASC for three years and Mr. Rourke served as an administrative assistant to two Congressmen. Four Under Secretaries, including Ms. Conaton, had legislative experience prior to their appointments. Ms. Conaton has the most legislative experience of all the 46 civilians appointed to either position, with almost a decade on committee staff in the House of Representatives.<sup>340</sup> Because the language of the military is different than that of Congress, the ability to have legislative experience in DOD civilian senior leaders is profitable to building relationships and communicating effectively between the two branches of government and 'undeviling' the dialogue.<sup>341</sup>

The dual-branch experience of Ms. Conaton provides invaluable insight into how Congress works, but a subordinate level of leadership also exhibits a strength of the Air Force. Unique to the Air Force is the

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<sup>336</sup> The Official Web Site of the U.S. Air Force. Biography: Erin C. Conaton. <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=13270> (accessed 12 March 2011)

<sup>337</sup> The Official Web Site of the United States Navy. Biography: Ray Maybus. [http://www.navy.mil/navydata/bios/navybio\\_ldr.asp?bioid=505](http://www.navy.mil/navydata/bios/navybio_ldr.asp?bioid=505) (accessed 12 March 2011)

<sup>338</sup> U.S. Department of Defense. Biography: John M. McHugh, Secretary of the U.S. Army. <http://www.defense.gov/bios/biographydetail.aspx?biographyid=228> (accessed 12 March 2011)

<sup>339</sup> The Official Web Site of the U.S. Air Force. Biography: Russell A. Rourke. <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6979> (accessed 12 March 2011)

<sup>340</sup> The Official Web Site of the U.S. Air Force. Biography: Erin C. Conaton. <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=13270>

<sup>341</sup> Conaton, USECAF, interview, 16 February 2011

Commander Capitol Hill Visit Program. This is an initiative of the Air Force and now mandated by Air Force instruction. It provides a unique opportunity for Congressmen to meet and build relationships with their Air Force constituents and provides a perspective absent from the 'beltway.' There are many examples of personal relationships emerging from the wing commander program, but it is better exemplified by the "on-the-record" comments of Congressmen during the House Armed Services Committee in February 2011 where four Congressmen commented that they had the "best air force base," in their district.<sup>342</sup> Another example is seen in previous HASC Chairman, Ike Skelton, from Missouri who knows the men and women of Whiteman AFB personally. He and his wife, Patricia, dedicate their time, effort, and energies to make Whiteman part of the 4th District of Missouri family.<sup>343</sup> The child developmental center at Whiteman is named after his late-wife, Susan Skelton, to honor her commitment to the Air Force. This relationship was cultivated by numerous wing commanders throughout Skelton's decades of public service.

### **Summary**

The Air Force's relationship with Congress did not devolve into a tenuous one overnight, and it will not be repaired in a day. Introspection, education, communication, and change are required on both sides of the river to strengthen the relationship between the two organizations. The Air Force understands the importance of a proactive stance with Congress and is actively taking steps to improve its effectiveness in supporting congressional needs. Change takes time, but slowly, with focused attention, the Air Force can rebuild its relationship with Congress.

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<sup>342</sup> House, *The FY2012 National Defense Authorization Budget Request from the Department of the Air Force before the House Armed Services Committee*, 112th Cong., 1st sess., 2011.

<sup>343</sup> Ike Skelton Congressman Web Site. <http://www.skeltonforcongress.com/about/> (accessed 12 March 2011).

## Conclusion & Recommendations

The Constitution of the United States built a system of checks and balances to ensure no one branch becoming too powerful. This system requires relationships between the branches to lead and protect the nation. Over time the size of government has grown, and today the degree of bureaucracy within the US Government requires a legislative liaison branch to assist in the effective communication between the military services and Congress. When one reviews the past 60-plus years, the civil-military relationship between the Air Force and Congress appears episodic, depending on the national security needs of the time.

When the Air Force was the dominant factor in security, Congressional support was strong and SAF/LL took a backseat in messaging the Air Force's needs. However, during the last decade military conflicts have shifted military support to the other services, and the Air Force finds itself in a precarious position trying to communicate its needs to defend the nation. Recent incidents, the unethical behavior in the tanker lease program and Thundervision contract, eroded the trust and confidence between the Congress and the Air Force. Today, SAF/LL has a pivotal role in reestablishing the trust, confidence, and communication between the Air Force and Congress. This paper provides some qualitative assessment, but it is hardly exact.

Legislative objectives for the services include: 1) budget; 2) authorization language required for policy; and 3) trust and confidence on Capitol Hill needed to "maneuver and engage."<sup>344</sup> SAF/LL is paramount to achieving these objectives in every aspect of its mission. In order to effectively attain them, SAF/LL must create transparency and focus on the dialogue; then a trust-centered relationship emerges.

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<sup>344</sup> Brigadier General Billy Farris, USA, Deputy Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview by the author, 16 February 2011



When the Air Force is on the hill advocating the President's budget, it is ultimately defending the programs necessary for the Air Force to defend the nation. It defends the budget, but that doesn't mean it must be defensive. The three branches of government exist for a reason. If the legislative and executive branches locked together on everything, the checks and balances would be lost.

Many people internal and external to the Air Force believe the service is afraid of disagreeing with Congress. Instead of shying away from conflict with the legislative branch, the service must embrace these somewhat difficult interactions as necessary and healthy for the entire system. That's the tough part of the SAF/LL job. "No one likes hostile negotiations, but the fact is: there are winners and losers, both in terms of Congressional districts and war-fighting capability."<sup>345</sup> Typically the Air Force brings a requirements-based argument to Congress, which must face two key hurdles: 1) the requirement is not as important as another requirement, especially in a fiscally constrained environment; and 2) the proposed requirement is bad for the country, the Congressman's district, the Congressional committee, or the professional staffer's portfolio. These two Congressional hurdles can be 1) very subjective in a world where analytical underpinnings rest on a foundation of assumptions, which are easily picked apart; and 2) constructed from the personal biases or motivations of Congress, which make it fairly easy to argue against the service assumptions and easily preclude action. It's a chaotic process for a reason - checks and balances. In a perfect world, DOD would have perfectly prioritized requirements. Congress would then either agree or disagree with the requirements or priorities based on its own analysis. However, in the real world, this is all shades of gray. "Of course politics is involved, and we have to make decisions without enough data, sometimes subjectively."

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<sup>345</sup> Thomas Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011.



This is “Clausewitz inside the beltway” – the fog and friction of political discourse.<sup>346</sup> A good working relationship with the legislative branch can positively impact these arguments, personal agendas, and provide effective leadership for the country’s security. The system works best when straight-forward senior leaders tell it like it is, get information as quickly as possible to the hill, and, when the message isn't consistent, the changes are clearly articulated and explained.

Every relationship offers room for improvement, and the current relationship between the Air Force and Congress is no different. It takes everyone who interacts with Congress to keep this in mind. The Air Force needs to seize the opportunity to build Congressional trust and confidence and can do so by focusing on the following areas.

**Communication:** continue to build a consistent message by flattening the hierarchy of the large, bureaucratic Air Force organization with monthly VTCs led by SAF/LL. These VTCs provide dissemination of senior leaders’ needs to the subordinate MAJCOMs, enabling development of a single voice and message. A very important aspect of communication that requires improvement is between the Pentagon LL offices (LLW, LLP, and LLZ) and the Capitol Hill LL offices (LLH and LLS). Both the LLH and LLS directors commented on their lack of interaction with LLW and LLP at the action office level. Understanding the Hill is organized separately by committee staff and personal staff does not mean the Air Force needs to divide itself similarly. Bi-weekly meetings, gatherings, discussions, or socials among the LL divisions are needed to ensure a consistent voice from the Air Force to Capitol Hill. The Air Force also needs to ensure easy communication externally. A simple fix is developing an LL website to allow anyone to ‘Google’ ‘Air Force Legislative Liaison’ and find basic information and contact data to start a conversation.

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<sup>346</sup> Lawhead, SAF/LLZ Director, interview by the author, 4 April 2011

**Attitude:** understand and believe the Air Force, OSD, and Congress are part of the same national security team, not adversaries. The Air Force must also hold its head high; mistakes will inevitably occur but the service must choose to look forward to the future versus stagnating on any past errors.

**Right people:** SAF/LL must hire the right people and keep them there. A balance must be struck between an individual's career and ability to serve the Air Force before hiring a person to the LL team. SAF/LL benefits from bringing back previous LL officers to serve as division directors and leaders; a skill identifier for Legislative Fellows provides a quick identification function to find, fix, and target the unique expertise gained from the fellowship. An opportunity to develop a strategic outlook would hiring a School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS) graduate to work in the SAF/LL organization. A SAASS graduate brings a unique perspective to advocating air power and has some understanding of civil-military relations, which could benefit the Air Force's communication and relationships on Capitol Hill.

**Proactive:** the Air Force and SAF/LL should not only be proud and confident, but also be proactive. SAF/LL needs to communicate early and often, both formally and informally. When programmatic and service requirements change, as they inevitably will, it is imperative to clearly explain the 5 Ws (Who, What, Where, When, and Why and even How) without service jargon and slang. This proactive demeanor translates into the transparency Congress desires.

**Educate by telling the Air Force story:** this needs to be accomplished by airmen at all levels, from the strategic level by general officers, to the operational level, to the tactical level by the airmen who recently return from current military operations. The Air Force needs to be confident in its service identity. Strategic communication is imperative in this venue, and a close cooperation with SAF Public Affairs is vital. Use the uniqueness of the Commander Capitol Hill Visit

Program to showcase the wing missions that support and defend the US, its interests, and values. And finally, in the wake of the 2009 cancelled Airpower Demonstration, the Air Force needs to develop an effective *Air Force Day* to inspire Congress in the relevance, need, and purpose of the USAF to national security.

These recommendations are not costly or grand in nature. They are simple undertakings apparent if one takes a step back to evaluate the current relationship and understands the desired, effective relationship. Rear Admiral Copeman articulated the delicacy of legislative liaison: “the service isn’t perfect, but what we stand for is...and as long as we keep that in mind and present ourselves in that manner to the people on the Hill we can’t go wrong.”<sup>347</sup> Successful legislative liaison is an art form that balances military technical expertise with communication in legislative language, understanding the security of the nation is the ultimate objective.

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<sup>347</sup> Rear Admiral Thomas Copeman, USN, Chief of Legislative Affairs, interview by the author, 17 February 2011.

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